

SONGS OF CONSOLATION
NEW POEMS BY
JOHN PAYNE



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SONGS OF CONSOLATION.

In the press

By the same author :

HAMID THE LUCKLESS and other Tales in verse.

For list of Mr Payne's works see last page.

SONGS OF CONSOLATION: NEW
POEMS BY JOHN PAYNE.

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*Vulneraria amena,
Leniente de la pena,
Del' enmendadura lena
Linda encarnacion ;*

*Con su caridosa calma,
Con su benbendita balma,
Consuelo de mi alma,
Venga resignacion.*

OLD SPANISH HYMN.



MATUTINAL.

I.

WE have said farewell to Sorrow;
We have buried him to lie
Where the day is as the morrow
And the sea is as the sky,
Where the shadows, mounting high,
From the silence silence borrow,
In the truce of How and Why.

2.

We have closed him in a coping
Of the glad and sorry years;
On his hands, for memories groping,
We have laid the links of tears;
On his eyes and lips and ears
We have heaped the dust of hoping,
We have cast the clods of fears.

3.

He will never waken, never;
He is buried, buried deep,
Where old memories sleep for ever
In the unawakening sleep,
Where men sow not neither reap,
Where the witless and the clever
Swell Time's ever-waxing heap.

'Tis his younger, milder brother
Of the care-constraining breath,
Twin with Sorrow and yet other,
Now with us that harboureth,
He that born, old story saith,
Was of Love, the mighty mother,
At a birth with Sleep and Death.

If repine with us still station,
Who but he can cause it flee?
If our hearts for consolation
Pine in prison, who but he
Hath the looks that heal and free,
He, whose name is Resignation
And whose eyes are as the sea?

Alp-grüm, Aug. 17, 1903.

HEY FOR ARCADY!

I.

FROM the mast the sail unbind!
What were feater, soul, for thee
Than a trip to Arcady?
Come; whilst yet the Fates are kind,
Sky serene and favouring wind,
Launch upon the laughing sea,
Heart at ease and fancy free,
Hope before and fear behind!

Yonder, in the golden West,
Where the ocean joins the sky,
Yonder, in the seas of rest,
Lo! the Golden Islands lie.
To those sojourns of the blest
Let us journey, you and I.

2.

Farewell, all we loved on land!
Sight of sun and sound of bell,
Sister, sweetheart, friend, farewell!
Never more with you to stand,
Never more to hold your hand,
Never more return, to tell
What beyond the sun befell,
Shall we from the unknown strand.

Leave the shore to sink unseen!
 Overboard with dole and teen!
 Overboard with dull concern!
 In the Future's hand, I ween,
 In the Fates' revolving urn,
 Is as good as what hath been.

3.

Bend the sail and ply the oar!
 On the surges blue and bright
 Past the foam flees, wide and white;
 Far to leeward sinks the shore.
 Doubt, repining, heave them o'er!
 Overboard with dull despite,
 Vain regret, and leave us light
 For the cruise that is before.

Nail Hope's streamers to the mast!
 Yonder, in the unknown sea,
 Is a home for you and me.
 Now is now and Past is past:
 Never more return will we,
 Never more from Arcady.

PARCE PRECOR.

I.

ON the upland breezes flowing, comes the flouting old
 refrain,
With its mocking cadence calling from the Infinite Inane;
 “Hearts that sever
 “Time may never,
 “Never set at one again!”
And old passion overflows me, as the torrent floods the plain.
Why remind me of the suff’rance that the years would
 else assain?
Why the smouldering embers quicken of remembrance on
 the wane?
 Why for ever
 My endeavour
 Thwart to heal me of my pain?
Will ye never, never loose me from the Past’s unholy chain?

2.

If your thought, o mocking memories, is to fan the
 ancient fire
Or to stir the lusts of boyhood in the world-awearied sire,
 All in vain is;
 For my pain is
 Other now, if yet as dire;
Fain my spirit’s feet deliver would I from the wish’s mire.
All the Past-time have I offered up on Passion’s funeral pyre;
In the furnaces of sorrow have I purged me of desire.

As the rain is,
 Pure my brain is
 And my heart a living lyre:
 To the snow-clad heights of duty all my thoughts and hopes
 aspire.

3.

Yet but mortal is my mettle and my wit but that of man
 And my feet must needs, unparleying, follow on the fated plan:
 Heavens under,
 None may sunder
 From the common earthly clan;
 All of woman born must bow them to the immemorial ban.
 Ever since, with light and darkness, cold and heat, the
 world began,
 In the hand of Fate the Former is the world-all's win-
 nowing fan;
 Hail and thunder,
 Woe and wonder,
 Sift the corn out from the bran;
 None the storm of sin and sorrow but must weather, how
 he can.

4.

Nay, have pity, mocking memories! Stir no more the
 ancient dole;
 Leave me yet in peace the remnant rescued from the ship-
 wrecked whole.
 With your chiding,
 Still abiding,
 Long ye poisoned have Life's bowl.
 Threescore years and more, unheeding lightning-flash and
 thunder-roll,

Still my spirit's bark I've guided through Life's maze of
reef and shoal,

With mine eyes, for steering, constant ever to the con-
stant pole.

From its guiding,

Hopes deriding,

Prithee, startle not my soul;

Lure me not to stray and perish in the sight of land and goal!

5.

Pine and pain, your task is ended; rest you silent nor fulfil
All the windwafts of Life's evening with your voices wild
and shrill.

All prevailing

Your assailing

For the breaking of the will

Was, the seeds of life and lusting in the chastened soul to kill.

Now that fought and won the fight is, call a truce with
strife and ill:

If the day of life was stormy, let the evening hours be still.

Leave your railing!

Light is failing

And night nigheth dark and chill;

Yet a streak of gold there lingers yonder on the Westward hill;

With the glories of the setting hallowed be Life's postern-sill!

SPRING'S ADVENT.

MARCH fleeth to windward, his waxing less fierce than
his wane;
A breath as of balsam there bloweth on land and on sea;
A portent there neareth of blessing and pleasance to be.
The starlings are shrilling, are piping their presage of rain;
The swallows to fieldward are winging and nestward again.
What is it that stirreth, that swelleth in lowland and lea?
What springeth in moorland and meadow, in boscage and tree?
What cometh? SPRING cometh, with healing and hope in
her train.

The throstles are trilling the olden, the golden refrain;
Spring cometh, hope 'neweth, life springeth in woodland
and wold:
The grasses are growing, buds blowing in garden and plain;
The meadows are gleaming, are streaming with silver and gold:
No heart but rejoiceth; no soul but to solace is fain;
The Winter is over and young is our world that was old.

MUSA SPRETA ¹.

I.

I HEAR the unwise assever that poetry is dead,
That song is out of season and singers out of date
And both alike unportioned in this our new estate,
Where nothing worth is reckoned, except it baketh bread,
That, in our age rant-ridden, our day delusion-fed,
Song is a flower of dreamland, that lingers overlate,
A rose, of love that breatheth unto a world of hate,
A bird, that pipes its heart out to ears grown deaf for dread.

They say that it was welcome, whilst yet the world was new
And men from rhymes, like children, must learn the good
and true;

But, now that old our earth is and we its dwellers old,
Plain prose and sober reason suffice to us for guide,
Nor from Life's battle leisure for poetry aside
Have we to turn and hearken its tinkling bells of gold.

2.

I hear and smile for pity and scorn of what they say:
No child but better knoweth than this their idle word,
No lark to scorn but laugheth their saying for absurd;
For poetry as flowers is, the air of every day

¹ See Macmillan's Magazine for February 1903, "The Province of Poetry".

That sweeten and as birdsongs that drive ill thought away.
What were a land unblossomed, a sky without a bird,
Wherein no roses flowered, no thrush was ever heard,
To lift the heart to heaven and hold it pure and gay?

Without the poet's magic, the blights of sordid care
To banish, life would languish and wither at the root.
A world, without a singer to keep it clean and fair,
As Springtide without blossom, as autumn without fruit,
As earth were, without heaven to give it light and air.
God save a songless people, a world whose music's mute!

COMPLEMENTALS.

I.

YOUTH, if I loved thee well,
If in thy frolic hours,
Broidered with birds and flowers,
Dearly I loved to dwell,
Oft of thy skittish spell,
I, by the heavenly powers,
Tired, of thy sweets and sours,
Shifting from heaven to hell.

Now is thy nesh tale told;
Turned is thy pictured page;
Changed are its blue and gold
Into the blank of age.
Solace in growing old
Yet is there for the sage.

Youth is a sunny sea;
Age is an inland lake.
Often the tempests wake,
Often the wild waves flee,
Often the surge we see
Shallop and ship o'ertake,
Drive them to beach and break
Up on the land a-lee.

Over the lake the sky
 Hangs with a saddened hue;
 Seldom a sail flits by,
 White on the sparkling blue:
 Yet, if it sunless lie,
 Stormless it lieth too.

2.

Love, if I held thee dear,
 If in thy sun-filled air
 Fain was I still to fare,
 Glad in thy golden year,
 Yet of thy changeful cheer
 Weary I waxed, of fair
 Shifting to foul fore'er,
 Smile growing frown, hope fear.

Now is thy time fordone;
 Evening upon thy day
 Come is, for storm and sun
 Peace, with her skies of gray.
Tag ohne Trost is none,
 Autumn as well as May.

Love is a mid-Spring day;
 Peace an October night.
 Oft, in its mid-delight,
 Cometh a storm in May,
 Wasteth its fair array:
 Canker and rust and blight
 Feed on its lovely might,
 Sweeping its sweets away.

Over October's skies
Scant is the sun of power;
Yet is it fair and wise;
Stirless of storm and shower,
Lightning and blast, it lies,
Calm and content its dower.

PERFECTIBILITY.

I.

BURIED cities in the far forgotten lands;
Aztec citadels, in tropic leafage drowned;
Ancient kingdom upon kingdom underground,
Ninefold silted in the arid Afric sands;
By the lonely Alleghany river-strands
Mute memorials of past peoples, mound on mound;
Giant bones of bygone races, silence-bound,
From the Scythian deserts lifting lifeless hands;
In the Orient and the Occidental climes,
Where the alligator basks to day and gapes,
Where the blood-snakes in the cactus-tangle twine,
Where the banyans are alive with babbling apes,
Once Republics brawled and prated, of old times,
Once kings banqueted, queens quaffed the funeral wine.

2.

One by one they fared and flourished, waxed and waned,
To earth's bosom till at last they must return;
Of their ashes in Thought's tutelary urn
Not a trace to hold them memoried remained.
On their bones new kingdoms rose, new cultures reigned,
Arts, philosophies, religions mild and stern,
Lived their lives and to the Silence in their turn
Passed and perished at the term Fate-foreordained.
Passed and perished into nothing are they all;
Yea, their very names are faded from Time's page.
Like the leaves, that to the earth in Autumn fall
And to earth returned, new leafage foster must,

So pass peoples upon peoples, age on age,
Others building of their dumb and breathless dust.

3.

Were the Fates not speech- and sense-less, eyes and ears,
Thought and apprehension lacking, tongue and brain,
In the voices of the thunder and the rain
We should hear them at our idle smiles and tears
Mock, our baseless hopes and no less baseless fears;
They would scoff to scorn our sorry strife in vain
And our nights and days were rounded for refrain
With the loud sardonic laughter of the spheres.
But of all the things that stir the stars to scorn,
Had they ears to mark and note our insect-hum,
Sure our talk of foul made fair in days to come,
Of perfection drawing nearer day by day,
Ours, a breath of life who live and pass away,
Most must move to mirth the powers of Night and Morn.

4.

When of those who have foregone us to the Goal,
Of the million million peoples, that have been
And have passed, their names forgot, to the Unseen,
We bethink us, we a pin-point in Life's whole,
Who to-morrow, with our every joy and dole,
Pass for ever, two eternities between,
Yet of Progress and To-be to prate o'erween,
In our spirit's ear we hark from pole to pole
How the Soul, that dureth dateless in each star,
From the shifts of Life and Death alternate free,
Part for ever of the things which live and are,
Ever present, quit of Past and of To-be,
Laughs to scorn our idle talk of worlds afar
And our prate of man's perfectibility.

SUMMER-VOICES.

"I LOVE you! Oh, I love you!" What other shall I say?
What is there else in Nature or in the world of men?
Without into the garden I look and see the wren
Perched high upon the swinging, the springing apple-spray,
His heart and soul out-singing unto the Summer day,
Just as he sang in golden, far olden times erewhen;
And nothing else he singeth, yea, nothing now as then,
But, "O my sweet, I love you, I love you now in May!"

Far out I hear to westward the cuckoo's chiming note;
I hear the finches fluting among the tree-tops tall;
The bees are coming, humming, about the tulip-beds;
The butterflies are flitting around the blue-bell heads:
From all the same song cometh; they have it still by rote;
"I love you, love you, love you!" They murmur, one and all.

TO THE WINDS.

(Suggested by Sir Edward Burne Jones's picture, "Sponsa de Libano.")

I.

WIND of the West, arise!
Speak to my wintry soul!
Lighten with balm Life's bowl,
Empty of cheer that lies!
Over Life's leaden skies
Sweeping from pole to pole,
Clear from the clouds of dole
Wash thou the weary eyes!
Why are thy voices dumb?
See where the crocus mute
Calleth on thee to come;
Hark, how the finches flute,
Syllabbling still thy name,
Bidding thee blow for shame!

2.

Wind of the North, depart!
Back to thy banks of snow!
Wine hast thou poured of woe
Into my thirsting heart.
Better the hermit's part,
Friendless and lone to go,
Life an eternal No,
Solace without and smart!

If of the Fates increase
 Be to my soul denied,
 Grant me at least surcease,
 Let me at least abide
 Stirless of hope and pride,
 Leave me at least in peace.

3.

Wind of the South, appear!
 Summon the Summer day!
 Gladsome the world and gay
 Make with the meadows' cheer!
 Winter o'erlong and fear
 Have with us had their stay.
 Bid them away, away!
 Back to their dungeons drear.
 Where hast thou lain so long?
 Oft, when the world was white,
 Oft, in the winter's night,
 Oft have I called for thee,
 Bidding thee blow for me,
 Quicken my soul with song.

4.

Wind of the East, away!
 Stir not the Springtide calm!
 Back, with thy wailing psalm,
 Flinch from the fields of May!
 Back to thy graves of gray!
 See, with its breath of balm,
 Stirring in herb and halm,
 Cometh the Summer day.
 Hence with thy blast of bale!
 Hence with thy poisoned thorn!

Hark how the breath of morn,
Blown on the April gale,
Telleth the vernal tale,
Hope in the heart new-born!

5.

Winds of the world, all hail!
Fountains of dearth and death,
Angels of storm and scaith,
Eastland and Northland gale,
Hence with your Winter's tale!
Ye of the balmy breath,
Come, as the Preacher saith,
Blow on my garden-pale!
Come, o ye South and West,
Quicken the waste for me,
Hearten with herb and tree
Meadow and moorland's breast,
Willing the woodbirds nest,
Willing the new world be!

AFTER MAJUBA.

I.

SINCE thou art fallen, England, on these days
When the vast shadow of thy mighty name,
Being cast no longer from the effulgent flame
Of that high faith, which, for the folk's amaze,
Once from thy soul filled all the worldly ways,
Is dwindled out before the shock of shame
And thy high heritage become a blame
To us, who reckon more the intriguer's praise,
The churl's reproach, than the white memory
Of all thy sons of old who died for thee; —
Since we, dull heirs unto a deathless fame,
Base love of ease, born of the trader-game
O'erpractised, suffer from our purblind gaze,
Feared of the light, blot out thy glory's noontide - blaze; -

2.

If the old England thou no longer art,
That, in the days bygone, by land and flood,
Waded for honour's sake through fire and blood,
That, by her heroes' hands, to India's heart
Her standards bore, that rent the bonds apart
Which bound the world; if in thy veins but mud
For ichor curdle, if content trade's cud
Thou be to chew and rest a mere world's mart;
If with thy dead upon Majuba-steep
Thine ancient soul lie buried, if in them

The fire that made thee great for ever sleep,
 Loose from thy brows the lying diadem;
 Cower on the earth; cast dust upon thy head;
 Muffle thy grievful face and mourn thy glories dead.

3.

But if a spark there smoulder yet in thee
 Of that high mettle, by the Picard fords
 Or on Najara's slope the Gallic hordes
 That smote, that forced Napoleon turn and flee,
 That chased the haughty Spaniard from the sea,
 That from the harp of danger's clangorous chords,
 Midmost the dissonant battle-clash of swords,
 Harmonious, drew the hymn of victory,
 Awake, arise! Be mindful of thy troth!
 Shake off the shame that these on thee have laid,
 Mother of nations, who have caused thee cower
 Beneath defeat, and show the world dismayed
 That England liveth yet! Lay by thy sloth
 And cast these faint-heart churls forth of thy place of power!

THE DESCENT OF THE DOVE.

THE DESCENT OF THE DOVE.

I.

PRAELUDIUM.

Voces in aere.

GENIÆ TERRESTRES loq.

THE world is white in the mild moon's light;
The lilies bloom in her silver sight;
Meseems some wonder is waking under
The star-flowered quiet of middle night.

From pole to pole, like a singing scroll,
The spherul sounds of the star-songs roll:
The air is gleaming with shapes of dreaming;
A mystic music is on my soul.

The wonder grows, like an opening rose;
The face of heaven with a halo glows;
For joy or fearing, some charm is nearing;
I feel its wings o'er the world unclose.

It fills me: there, in the middle air,
A splendour as of a meteor's hair!
The gates of heaven are open; the seven
Great angels glitter upon the stair.

The flower-flame flies through the utmost skies;
The glory of heaven is in mine eyes;
I see, descending, a stair unending;
From pole to zenith its pillars rise.

And lo! in the core of the lights, that soar
And banner heaven from shore to shore,
Far fiercelier glowing, a glory's growing,
Is beaming and brightening evermore.

The lights unfold, as a bud leaf-scrolled,
 And forth of them flowers a dove of gold:
 My weak sight's failing, such glory's hailing
 On earth and ocean, on wood and wold.

It spreads its wings; to a thousand strings
 And pipes, the height of the heavens rings:
 The world rejoices with myriad voices,
 The night is a living lute that sings.

The angels fly through the welkin high;
 The dove sinks down through the spangled sky;
 Its wings are bright'ning; like awful lightning,
 Its sight is nearing, is rushing nigh.

The air burns bright with its streaming light;
 New noontides flower in the middest night;
 Its wings wax nearer, more dread and clearer,
 A meteor hailing from heaven's height.

I faint for fear, as the sign draws near;
 The glory is all too great to bear:
 Is there no hiding from the abiding
 Of that divineness so fierce and fair?

The world is wide, yet I cannot hide;
 The splendours flood me on every side;
 The ocean's riven with gold of heaven,
 Its deeps and caverns are glorified.

Fast, fast it nighs through the streaming skies;
 The great earth quakes as a God that dies:
 My face is paling, my sight is failing,
 The lids fall down on my blinded eyes.

II.

IN DOMO JOACHIMI.

MARSA URCEO loq.

THE diamond shimmer of the dawn
 Is faded out from hill and lawn;
 And in the vanward of the day,
 The bridal hours have cast away
 Their virgin veils of gold and pearl.
 Yonder the cuckoo pipes; the merle
 Flutes on the blossomed figs, aglow
 With bees, where, but an hour ago,
 The nightingale did sit and sing,
 That all the woods made echoing
 Unto her soft complaining note;
 There, in the dawn, with quivering throat,
 She sat and sang of love and pain,
 Till up the sun leapt and the plain
 Surged of a sudden into red;
 Then knew she that the night was dead
 And flitted after with shy wing.

I know not what foreshadowing
 Is on my sense; a haze of dreams
 Hovers about my head: meseems,
 The glamour of some grace to be,
 Some strange fair fate encircleth me;
 For, all about me, far and wide,
 The workday world is glorified:
 The common things of daily use,

Well-rope and bucket, cup and cruse,
 Platter and trencher, wheel and loom,
 Are lit with some unearthly bloom,
 Some light of loveliness arcane,
 That purges them of breach and stain
 And as with a celestial birth
 Blazons the creatures of the earth.
 Some mystery haloes me, some sweet
 Strange homage follows on my feet,
 Whereof, meseems, all creatures wot
 And I alone, I know it not.
 Nay, in the wood-ways to and fro
 Or in the meadows as I go,
 The herbs, the lilies in the grass,
 The leaves gaze at me, as I pass;
 The meek sheep raise their eyes to mine;
 The kidlings and the couchant kine
 Lift up their heads to look on me:
 The woodlands whisper, "This is she!"
 The very birds break off their song,
 As I go by, the meads along,
 And follow me with wondering eyes.
 The skylarks flutter from the skies,
 To settle on my head and neck;
 And in the ripples of the beck,
 That prattles o'er the pebbles white,
 Athwart the mosses, in the light
 Lythe waftings of the upland breeze,
 The winds that tremble through the trees,
 The dove-notes in the olive-close,
 I hear a murmur; "There she goes,
 The maid of mystery, the rose
 Of reverence without compare,
 The happy heaven-affected fair!"

There breathe around me everywhere
 Celestial savours in the air
 And viewless hands about me are
 Busied to fend and keep afar
 Whatever is not wholly good.
 I have no use of earthly food;
 No mortal meats my needs suffice;
 The herbs and fruits of Paradise
 By messengers invisible
 Are broughten to my virgin cell
 And the clear streams of heaven, to still
 My thirst, do well for me at will.
 A breath of bliss, a light of love
 Celestial, hovers me above;
 The airs of heaven about me stray,
 Encompassing me night and day.

I am fulfilled of heavenly things:
 The shadow of angelic wings
 Is to my couch a canopy;
 And as awake anights I lie,
 I see the birds of heaven fleet
 Across the skies and hear the beat
 Of plume and pinion on the air.
 So filled I am with visions fair
 And votive fantasies that nought
 Of otherwhat is in my thought.
 I have no care to mark the flight
 Of this our world of day and night.
 The seasons' lapse uneath I note,
 The ripening plums, the blossomed lote,
 The flush of dawn, the shadows' fall:
 My dreams to me are all in all.
 Yet more and more on me they press,

Till with their thronging rapturousness
 My every thought and sense is thrilled,
 My days and nights with visions filled
 So sweet, so real, I can keep
 Scant reckoning 'twixt wake and sleep
 Nor know if I have lived or dreamed.
 Nay, yestermorn at day, meseemed,
 Whilst yet I slumbered in my bed,
 When in the dawn the first faint red
 Began upon the East to be,
 The scent of lilies startled me
 And opening my sleep-sealed eyes,
 — Where, through the casement's space, the skies
 Poured the pale opal light that brings
 The chill and early day, — with wings,
 Star-sprinkled, fleecy, snowy-white,
 Half-folded, as a bird's from flight
 New lit, and shape as 'twere one sweet
 Soft flame of fire from head to feet, —
 I saw the angel of the Lord:
 Not that stern servant of His sword,
 Michael, nor Raphaël, His rod,
 But Gabriel, the Breath of God,
 The hoïy bird, that on the height
 Of heaven nesteth day and night,
 The Faithful Spirit, that He chose
 His messenger to be to those
 Whom He on earth would fain rejoice,
 His will incarnate, bodied voice.
 Seven lilies in his hand he had,
 So wonder-sweet of scent and glad
 That whoso smelt thereof might not
 Except rejoice: no garden-plot
 On earth lent life unto the seven;

But in the garths they grew of heaven.

Then, looking on me with mild face,
 "Hail, Mary," said he, "great of grace!
 The Lord Almighty is with thee.
 Blesséd to all eternity,
 Above all womankind, art thou,
 O'er all that have been and are now,
 O happy, heaven-accepted maid!"

Withal meseemed that not afraid
 I was nor at the angel's sight
 Or at the greatness of the light
 Astonied, that about his face
 And presence played and filled the place,
 But troubled was in very deed
 Anent the manner of his rede
 Alone and filled with wonderment
 Of what so strange a greeting meant
 And what in fine should come of it.
 But he, as if indeed forewit
 He had of what was in my thought,
 Straight, "Mary," answered, "fear thou nought
 Nor in my greeting deem of thee
 Is aught against thy chastity.
 Thou hast found favour with the Lord,
 For that thou hast, of thine accord,
 Of clean virginity made choice;
 Wherefore I say to thee, Rejoice!
 The Lord about thee and within
 Is verily; and without sin,
 Thou shalt conceive and bear a son,
 Whose name shall be for benison
 To all upon the earth that be."

Withal great wonderment on me
 There fell to hear him speak so mild
 And strange; and "How shall I with child
 Be gotten, sir," to him I said,
 "And bear, that am a clean poor maid
 Nor ever had with man to do?"
 Whereat he looked on me anew
 With shining face and said, "Fear not;
 A child on thee shall be begot,
 Withouten breach of maidenhead,
 Of God, the Lord of quick and dead."
 And I, yet wondered more and more
 At what he said, — for passing sore
 And grievous to me to believe
 It seemed, — "Sir, shall I then conceive
 And by the Living God, indeed,
 Without the addition of man's seed,
 With child, as other women, go
 And bear as they?" But he, "Not so,
 O Mary! It with thee shall not
 Be as of other women's lot:
 Thou shalt with child, as I have said,
 Be and bring forth, whilst yet a maid;
 Yea, shalt give suck and yet remain
 A maid with whom no man hath lain
 Nor handled. For the Holy Spright
 Shall come upon thee and alight;
 The power of God Most High shall be
 About and overshadow thee.
 Since unto God, thou wottest well,
 There nothing is impossible.
 So, yet a maid, a son shalt thou
 Bear, unto whom all knees shall bow.
 Great, great and holy shall he be,

For he shall reign from sea to sea;
 Yea, unto him the Lord shall give
 His father David's throne; and live
 And over Jacob's house hold sway
 Shall he; nor of his kingdom aye
 Shall be an ending. Wherewithal
 The child's name Jesus shalt thou call,
 For that his people, all as one,
 He from their sins shall save; and Son
 Shall he be hight of the Most High,
 The One, the Living God." And I,
 "Behold the handmaid of the Lord!
 Be it according to thy word."

Therewith he stinted: then, with voice,
 As 'twere a trumpet's sound, "Rejoice,
 O thrice, o four times blessed maid,
 O happy child of Eve," he said,
 "In this thy favour without price!
 For that the gates of Paradise,
 Erst for thy mother's sin shut to,
 Through thee shall opened be anew
 And barred by thee the gates of Hell,
 That art the joy of Israël,
 The glory of Jerusalem!"

Withal he kissed my kirtle's hem
 And presently was gone from sight:
 And I awoke and saw no wight;
 But on the faldstool by my side
 A pot of graven gold I spied,
 Wherein seven golden lilies stood,
 Whose savour was so glad and good
 That all the chamber reeked of it,

And on the leaves did shine and sit
 The sparkles yet of heaven's dew,
 As stars they were; whereby I knew
 That this which I had seen no dream
 Had been indeed, as I did deem,
 But Gabriel had stood me by
 And brought me speech of God Most High.

But, see, the day draws on apace
 And yonder, from the winnowing-place,
 Methinks I hear the nearing sound
 Of labourers' voices, homeward bound.
 The time draws near the forenoon-meal,
 And in the nook the spinning-wheel
 Stands idle, idle yet the rock,
 Whereon the purple, lock on lock,
 Tarries the spinning, being meant,
 When spun and weft, to ornament
 The ark upon the festal day,
 And fringed and knotted with orfray,
 To deck the Mercy-Seat for Him
 Who sits between the Cherubim.

Quick! In its place the spinning-wheel
 I set and order pirn and reel;
 Then, seated on the spinning-stool,
 The treadle press and ply the spool.
 The spindle swirls, the wheel runs round,
 The place hums with the pleasant sound,
 The trill and chirp of cheerful toil,
 That solves the thought of stain and soil
 And holds both soul and body sweet.
 So, being stablished in my seat,
 I ply my task with hands and feet

Nor from my labour slacken may
Until the darkening of the day.

But lo! what light is this that grows
And greatens round me, as there rose
The sun from out my window-sill?
What savours sweet are these that fill
My every sense with Heaven's airs?
What voices vie me round allwheres,
What smitten lutes that wane and swell,
Fulfilling all my virgin cell
With sights, scents, sounds past earth's device,
Airs, flames and flowers of Paradise?
And yet more lustrous than the light,
Rarer and greater of delight
Than all the sights and sounds and scents
That overflow my ravished sense,
And yet more glorious to behold,
A wonder-dove, with wings of gold
And feathers each a flowering flame,
With eyes as heaven from whence it came
Coerulean, and in its bill
An almond-spray, upon the sill
Is lighted down and with its gaze
Holds all my senses in amaze.
Then, as, with eyes that fear to lose
Some sight of splendour, if they close,
With ears attent and thought and 'brain,
Upon the miracle I strain,
Of wonder such fulfilled as fear
Forthcasteth all, a voice I hear,
(Though none but that bright bird is near),
Gracious and grave, — no mortal breath,
In this our world of life and death,

The lips e'er drew from which it came,
— That calleth on me by my name,
“Hail, Mary,” saying, “maiden bright!
Thou hast found favour in My sight.
Fear not, to all eternity
For God the Lord shall be with thee.”
And therewithal the wonder-dove
Wings up and hovering above
My head, sinks down upon my breast,
With folded plumes, as in a nest,
Fulfilling me with such a flood
Of rapture that, for ill and good,
My every thought, my every sense
Is bound and fettered with suspense:
Enforced I am to sit and wait,
Nor can I stir, the coming fate
To fend from me: I cannot say,
“Take, Lord, this cup from me away!”
Nay, all my sense strains rather out,
In ecstasy excluding doubt,
Toward that flowerage of fire,
That fount celestial of desire;
And with wide arms outstretched and eye
Brimmed with desireful tears, I cry,
“Thy handmaid, Lord, behold and see!
I give, I grant myself to Thee.”

III.

POSTLUDIUM.

*Voces in coelo.*GENII UNIVERSALES *loq.*

THE air is ablaze With the sunseting haze, With the
 westerling rays of the sun;
 A faint little breeze From the slumbering seas In the tops
 of the trees there doth run;
 The world is a-dream With the glamour and gleam Of the
 day that is nigh to be done.

Far out in the West, O'er an ocean at rest, Float the Isles
 of the Blest in the air;
 The lands of the light, In the heavenly height, To the
 rapturous sight are laid bare;
 The sunseting glory Builds, story on story, From earth
 unto heaven its stair.

The meadows are mute; Not a nightingale's flute, Not a
 pipe, not a lute, not a chord;
 The birds are asleep In the bowery deep, The kine and
 the sheep on the sward;
 The moon in the gate Of the night is await To take up
 her watch and her ward.

No sound in the air, Save a sigh here and there From the
 windwafts that fare through the trees;
 The forests are dumb; Not an answering hum To the voices
 that come on the breeze;
 A silence of gloom, In the presence of doom, Is over the
 lands and the seas.

What aileth the day That it passeth away, With a blight
of affray on its bloom?

What is it that stirr'eth The air and the earth With a boding
of birth and of doom?

The world is await With a feeling of fate, Of a wonder
that wakes in its womb.

Ah, there the last ray Of the darkening day There fadeth
away from afar!

Down falleth the dew; Out by darkness the blue And the
gold of heaven's hue blotted are;

The night flashes out With a rutilant rout, A flowerage of
star upon star.

And lo! with night's fall, As it were at a call, The high-
columned hall of the sky

Is riven in sunder With shapes of wonder, That lighten
and thunder on high:

The word is spoken, The silence broken With trumpetings
far and nigh.

The gates of heaven In twain are riven, Its portals seven
unbound;

With trumps and lyres, With harps and choirs, Its towers
and spires resound;

With acclamation Of jubilation Its walls are compassed round.

The sound of the bells Of heaven's citadels Yet loudlier
swells and higher;

The lift grows lighter, The flower-flames brighter, They waxen
whiter, nigher:

And lo! in the strait Of the heavenly gate I see, as I wait, aspire
A dove of wonder, With wings of thunder And form as a
flame of fire.

Straight, straight is its flight To the Throne of White; 'Tis
lost in the light, 'tis gone:

The great gates close: But athwart them glows The light,
like a rose of dawn.

As the sphere is whirled, 'Tis cast and hurled And scattered
the world upon;

Its glory streams, Like a sun in dreams, On meadow and
hill and lawn.

I know not what choice is In earth and her voices, That
thus she rejoices, with glee

And rapture receiving The chains that are weaving For
gladness or grieving to be.

The world is all gladness; I sit in sadness; For Midsummer
madness to me

The mirth without meaning, The wild overweening Of
heaven, Of earth and of sea.

Whilst all things sing To the coming King Of Summer and
Spring to be,

Whilst heaven in mirth For the new time's birth Consents
with earth and sea,

Apart from them, Our requiem For that which must die
chant we.

An epoch endeth, A new descendeth, Which all-to rendeth
the old;

Our age so hale, With its weal and its bale, Is past as a
tale that is told;

A new comes after, Of lack of laughter, Of care and
slaughter and cold;

An age of sowing For no man's mowing, Of grieving and
greed of gold.

From land and from sea Must the old Gods flee: I weep
as I see and sigh

How each sweet sprite From the air and the light, The day
 and the night, must fly,
 The nymph from the wood, The hoof-footed brood, The
 ill and the good, pass by.
 Ah woe's me for Pan, The lover of man! The end of his
 span is nigh.
 When bloweth the flower Of the newborn power, The God
 in that hour must die
 And we, fair brothers, Must yield to others The keys of
 the earth and sky.

I grieve as I go, Forsooth for I know The travail and woe
 untold,
 The wrack and the war, The stressfulness sore, That the
 future in store doth hold,
 The horror of hate 'Twixt the small and the great, In the
 scriptures of Fate enscrolled,
 The dearth and the death, The sorrow and scaith, That the
 forthcoming faith enfold,
 The frost that shall fall On the hut and the hall, On great
 and on small, young and old,
 The bale that shall brood On the ill and the good, On weald
 and on wood and on wold,
 When the breeze shall be bare Of the sylphs of the air Nor the
 elves shall set share in the mould,
 When the Dryad the brake And the Naiad the lake And
 the Faun shall forsake the fold,
 When the smile from the sea And the laugh from the lea And
 the green from the tree shall be polled,
 When, for sorrowful thought, Men rejoice not in aught And
 all shall be bought and sold.
 And well I know, well, That the spirits, in hell And in
 heaven that dwell, shall behold

The dawn of the day When the folk, for dismay Of their
summerless way, heavy-souled,
Shall, dumb in their doom, In their lives without bloom, Look
back from their gloom and their cold,
From the blood-boltered maze Of their faiths and their frays,
And sigh for the days of old,
When the Gods debonair, The frank and the fair, Yet
governed the age of gold.



THE PACT OF THE TWIN GODS.



THE PACT OF THE TWIN GODS.

I.

NOW Life and Death had striven many a day
Which should have mastery
Over all things that be
Upon the earth and in the hollow deep;
And for their endless strife
The world was all perplexed
And all the ordered harmonies of Life
Ceased from the accustomed course of night and day,
Being so vexed
And worn with shock of battle and duress.
For whiles on all things lay,
Living and dead, the sleep
Of Death, when he sometime had brief success;
And whiles the hollow breast
Of the cold grave gaped wide
And all the things which therewithin did bide
Came forth and knew
The passionate unrest
Of life once more,
When, in the course of war,
The frank fair God from the funereal wight
Did wrest
The palm of fight.
So that by turns there blew
The icy blasts of death and the sweet soft
Zephyrs of life
About the world and there was endless strife
Twixt God and God. The night,
Erst sacred unto death, was filled and rife

With birth and fluttering
 Of newborn life;
 And many a goodly thing,
 Glad with the joy of being, bloomed aloft
 Above the outraged portals of the grave.
 Death could no longer save
 The dead from stress and resonance of being
 And the pale ghosts, a-fleeing
 From out the tombs, upturned
 By the swift God, to seek
 Some refuge in the crannies of the rock
 Or in the hill-caves bleak,
 Were caught up by the blast
 Of birth imperious and born
 Into new shapes of life and love and beauty
 And the old rack
 And whirl of earthly duty
 Claimed them again in yet another shape,
 Although the grave did gape
 To take their tired souls back
 To its cold breast
 And in the dim and stirless peace of death
 To give them their last rest.

And in his turn did Death usurp the day
 And all the things Life had
 Of power and symbol, 'neath the risen sun;
 For he did glide,
 With his cold breath
 And frosted gaze,
 Across the meadows wide
 And the fair woodland ways,
 And touching all the things that had begun
 To open to the light

Their buds and petals glad
 With the new morn, did slay
 The spirit of joy within their bosoms bright.
 Wherefore their hues did fail;
 The corn-sheaves' glitterance faded into grey;
 The woodbirds' delicate notes
 Did faint for fear
 And all sweet sounds, that rise,
 Under the flower-blue skies,
 From feathered throats,
 For the young day to hear,
 When the stern God swept darkling o'er the plain,
 Were fain
 To leave their life and wander, phantom-wise,
 Ghosts of themselves, droning sad songs of death.
 The heavens grew dim and drear;
 The very sun turned pale;
 The clouds put on a veil
 And fled across the grey
 Of the young blighted day,
 Like ghosts of Titans driven o'er the white
 Of the pale Infinite
 By the doom-angel's breath.

Beneath the heavens' shroud,
 Men knew not if they died
 And had no joy in being, if allowed
 To live; for still a wraith
 Of death was over life
 And a gold gleam of life did blazon death.
 One great grave was the earth;
 The grave was full of birth:
 Even in the birth was rife
 The ghastliness of dying

And the delight of mirth,
Of being and its gladness,
Blent with the ghosts' shrill sighing
And the death-sadness.
So was there endless strife,
By land and sea,
Twixt the Gods Death and Life;
And unto neither fell the mastery.

II.

THUS did it chance, one middle Summer's day,
 The twin Gods met
 Within a valley, set
 Twixt two great ridges of the Westward hills;
 And through the gorge there lay,
 Midmost the woods thick-sown upon the side
 Of the sloped cliffs, two wide,
 Fair-seeming rills,
 Whereof the one was clear
 And bright and swift and glad
 And without haste or fear,
 Fled singing o'er its sands,
 Between thick-woven bands
 Of many-coloured flowers
 Of all sweet sorts that come with summer hours.
 So clear a soul it had
 That one could see fair fish therein at play,
 Golden and emerald and ruby-red
 And topaz and clear blue
 And many another hue
 Of glad and glancing scales; and all its way
 Was busy with bright things and gay and rife
 With winged and footed life,
 That glittered as it sped.

The other one was sad
 And deep and sombre-hued
 And none had ever viewed
 The bottom of its bed.
 Beside it grew no blooms
 Nor in its flood was any moving thing,

That unto mind might bring
The memories of life; but all its stream
Was full of strange dim glooms
And sombre mysteries
And all its waves did seem
To murmur of death's shade
And the repose that lies
Behind the folded portals of the night.

Yet not withal was aught
Of enmity between
The neighbouring rills. Despite
Their difference, both sought
The same fair end
And through the jewelled green
Of that calm valley's grass
Did wend
Their sidelong way in careless amity,
Until they joined and fell
Into a clear blue mere
And in its heaven-hued glass
Put off their difference
And thought no shame in that fair lymph to be
Made one in peace.

III.

THEN those two Gods, that came
Together, like a flame
Of war intense,
Thinking to end their strife
And solve the struggle for omnipotence
With one great effort, saw
These two, as different
As Death and Life,
That, natheless, side by side,
In amity did glide
And at the last their murmuring currents blent
In all delight of peace;
And with that fair fulfilment of God's law
Of natural harmony ravished, they did cease
To breathe out flame and war:
Each for awhile gave o'er
His enmity and gazed
Into his fellow's eyes with mind perplexed,
Half vexed
With some old remnant of despite
And half amazed
With a new sense of right
And possibility:
And each could see
The nascent softness of a new desire,
Dim-radiant within
The other's eyes,
For rest from all the din
And weariness of strife.

Then, on this wise,
After a resting-while,

Unto the frosty sire
 Spake, with a dawn-sky's smile,
 The great God Life,
 Saying, "My brother,
 What boots it that so long
 We have done hurt unto each other
 And to the world
 And have so often and so sore wrought wrong
 To the sad race of men, — that we have hurled
 The firm sky-orders from their base with fight,
 So I, a God, of thee, another God
 As great, might have the mastery?
 Now, of a truth, I see
 That we are surely equal in our might
 And all these years have trod
 The battle all in vain;
 For Death and Life must be
 And may not change or wane
 Nor the one have domain
 Over the other's fee.
 Wherefore I pray of thee that we do take
 Joined hands once more
 And make
 A thing that shall be for a covenant
 Betwixt us against war
 And lawless strife;
 A thing that shall of both our souls partake
 And all our attributes
 Shall share,
 As a fair tree that, by the gardener's knife
 Grafted to a plant of various kind, doth bear
 Twy-natured fruits;
 A thing that shall be sad as violets' breath
 And blithesome as the breeze

That in the Spring
Among the blossomed trees
Doth float and sing;
That shall be sadder and more sweet than Death
And gladder and more sweet than Life,
That as a king betwixt us twain shall sit
And with flower-bands
Linking our hands,
Shall lead us forth upon our various way,
As two fair twins that play
With joinéd hearts and lives together knit
And have no thought of harm."

And so the pact was sworn between the two,
That they should work to do
This charm;
And Life and Death clasped hands on it.

IV.

THEN Life brought flowers and breezes and sun-gold
And juices of the vine;
And Death brought silver of the moonlight cold
And the pale sad woodbine.

Life brought clear honey of the buxom bees
And fruits of autumn-time;
And Death brought amber from the murmuring seas
And fretwork of the rime.

God Life did rob the jasmine of its balm,
Death the pale lily's bells;
Life brought a handful of the summer-calm,
Death of the wind that swells

And sighs about the winter-wearied hills;
Life the Spring heaven's blue,
Death brought the grey, that in the autumn fills
The skies with its sad hue.

And with these things of mingling life and death
Did the twin Gods upbuild
A golden shape, which drew the goodliest breath
That ever bosom filled:

For it was lovesome as the risen sun
And pale as ended night,
Glad as the glance of an immortal one
And mild as the moon's light.

The form of it was white as is the snow,
When the rough winter reigns,
And rosy-tinted as the even-glow,
After the April rains.

The charm of day was in its violet eyes
 And eke the spells of night;
 Therein one read of the gold Orient skies
 And the soft Spring's delight.

And for a voice Life lent it all the tune
 That from lark-throats doth rise;
 And God Death added to it, for a boon,
 The sad sweet night-bird's sighs.

Its hands were warm as life and soft as death,
 Fragrant as flowers and white
 As the wan lucent stone that covereth
 The graves in the moon's sight.

Its hair was golden as the sheer sun's shine,
 When the hot June rides far,
 And tender-coloured as the hyaline
 Of the pale midnight star.

Red was its mouth as is the damask rose
 And purple as night-shade,
 Most glad and sad, fulfilled of lovesome woes
 And joys that never fade.

Swift were its rosy golden-sandalled feet,
 Yet lingering as the night,
 And the soft wings that on the air did beat
 Were of the windflower's white.

And on its head they set a double crown,
 Golden and silver wrought,
 Wherein sweet emeralds for hope were sown
 And amethysts for thought.

Thus did the two Gods make this lovesome thing,
 To stand betwixt them twain;
 And therewithal they crowned the fair shape king
 O'er them and suzerain.

And from that time there hath no more been strife
 'Twixt these two Gods of might;
 For evermore betwixten Death and Life
 That creature of delight

Hath gone about the weary worldly ways,
 Holding them hand in hand,
 So that Death never on a mortal lays
 His finger, but there stand

Beside him Life and that sweet shape which they
 Have for their master made;
 And on like guise, when dawn hath lit the day,
 Death walketh in the shade,

Hard by the sun and all the gauds of life:
 And by them, without cease,
 The winged shape goes and orders all their strife
 To harmony and peace.

And if one ask which God he cherisheth
 His brother God above,
 Methinks his heart beats franklier for Death;
 For lo! his name is Love.

SIR WINFRITH.



SIR WINFRITH.

I.

THE woodlarks welcome the risen day;
The ringdoves croon in the cool wood-way;
The meads are telling the tale of May.

Sir Winfrith fares through the forest wide;
The glad Spring greets him on every side;
The brakes are ablaze with the blossom-tide.

The glades, as he rideth, with glee-notes ring;
The cuckoos call him, the woodlarks sing,
"Ah, whither away, Sir Son of the King?"

"Ah, whither so sadly?" The throstles cry.
"Who ever the son of a king heard sigh,
When the sun is aloft in the love-month's sky

And the larks are a-lilt in the blue above?"
"Alack for the lurdane," rejoins the dove,
"Who fareth alone for default of love,

Who goeth a-gloom in the gladsome day,
Who's dumb for desire in the merry May,
When all things else in the world are gay?

Who ever heard tell of the son of a king,
That sitteth forlorn in the flowered Spring,
When the brakes are a-bloom and the small birds sing?"

The king's son rideth; he heareth nought;
His brows are bound with the thorns of thought;
He fareth alone, unsquired, unsought.

He rideth sans huntsman or merry moot;
 His eyes are heedless, his lips are mute;
 He's deaf to the beck of the blackbird's flute;

He lendeth no ear to the linnet's lyre;
 His soul is aflame with a seething fire;
 His heart is heavy for wandesire.

But hark! what hushes the thristle's throat?
 What wild sweet sound in the air's afloat,
 That all-to muteth the wild merle's note?

A surge of song through the flowered trees,
 A flood of fair tones and melodies,
 That fareth a-wing on the wayward breeze;

A surge of singing so sweet and high,
 It floodeth the forest far and nigh,
 It beareth the soul to the bovemost sky.

It stirreth the spright with its blithesome breath;
 It filleth the heart with hope and faith,
 With love undeeming of life and death.

The sweet sounds waken Sir Winfrith's ear;
 His sense they deluge, his dreams they stir;
 He stayeth his steed anon to hear.

So still he sitteth that who alone
 Had lighted on him thus stirless grown
 Had held him a man on a steed of stone.

Awhile he sitteth, till all around
 The magic music hath weft and wound
 His heart with its viewless webs of sound:

Then, fenceless drawn by his longing's force,
 He lighteth down from his careless course
 And tethereth thereanigh his horse.

Through thorn and thicket, through bog and brake,
 'Twixt doubt and deeming, 'twixt sleep and wake,
 He fareth on for that sweet song's sake.

Down sinketh the sun in the dark'ning West
 And still Sir Winfrith, with panting breast,
 Unfeared, ensueth that fleeting quest;

And still the singing before him flees,
 Now farther borne by the faithless breeze,
 Now nearer turning among the trees.

Good heart, Sir Winfrith! The goal is nigh.
 Good heart to the chase! The tree-tops high
 Show thinlier ever against the sky.

And lo! where he comes, in the sunset hour,
 To a glade in the midmost forest bower,
 And there in the midst a darkling tower.

No cresset flares from the turret's height;
 No beacon beckons with lovesome light;
 No window welcomes the wandering knight:

Nay, there all darkling the tower doth stand,
 The finger like of a giant hand
 Uplift to threaten the heavenly land.

But lo! from the top, like a golden bell,
 The tones of the voice ineffable
 In reflux melodies wane and swell.

Blithe is Sir Winfrith; he thinketh fast
 The bird and the music to have at last;
 He holdeth the pain and the labour past.

But, though he seeketh on all sides four,
 No sign he seeth of gate or door,
 Nor port nor postern, behind, before,

Nor wicket nor window open-eyed.
 Blank is the bastion's every side,
 Nought but the walls and the forest wide.

His horn he windeth both loud and high;
 The wild wood echoes it far and nigh:
 Except the echo there's no reply.

But still that voice from the turret tall
 In waves of music doth rise and fall,
 With maddening melody flooding all.

Sad is Sir Winfrith: the bird is there;
 But built is its nest in the topmost air;
 'Tis far from his hand as heaven's stair.

The music holds him; he may not flee;
 And something warns him to wait and see;
 He wakes and watches behind yon tree.

II.

The sun dips under and all about
 The tents of the moon a rabble-rout
 Of clouds is camping; no star shines out.

The birds are silent both far and nigh;
 The breeze in the boughs hath ceased to sigh;
 The black night blindeth the earth and sky.

The voice is dumb with the vanished light,
 The music mute for the fallen night;
 Dead darkness holdeth the turret's height.

But lo! in the midnight mirk and drear
 A shudder runs through the air of fear,
 A sense of somewhat of evil near.

The live night throbs with the thrill of dread
 That stirs in the heart whose blood runs red
 At sight and sense of the risen dead.

And sudden he feels, though his eyes see nought,
 There pass him by, with the speed of thought,
 A thing as swift as the thin fire-flaught;

A wraith from the middle darkness' womb,
 Of curses compound and death and doom:
 And down by the tower-foot there rends the gloom

A voice like an osprey's shriek a-scare,
 A cry that shrills through the shrivelled air;
 "Rapunzel! Minion! Down with thy hair!"

There beams at the tower-top something bright
 And down by the wall, through the startled night,
 There slides what himseems is a ladder of light;

A glittering fleece of golden hair,
 From top to tower-foot it floateth there;
 It hangs from the height like a shining stair.

Some black beast-thing on the tress lays hold
 And speeds to the top by that stair of gold:
 Ah God! 'tis a wizened witch-wife old!

A beldam, whose hands like bird-claws show,
 With nose like a beak and eyes that glow
 Like red-hot coals through her locks of snow.

She wins to the top: without a sound,
 The fleece floats up, as a skein is wound;
 In dusk and silence the night is drowned.

The gleam is gone from the turret's height;
 Abideth nothing for sound or sight;
 All dark and still as the still dark night.

Frozen with fear is Sir Winfrith's blood;
 He knows the witch-wife that haunts the wood,
 Who hateth all that is fair and good.

The glad day gleams on the Eastern hill;
 The tower stands darkling and stern and still;
 Sir Winfrith forth of the forest will.

Through thorn and thicket his last night's track
 He follows; he springs on his horse's back;
 He fares to his father's palace back.

III.

Again on the morrow, with risen day,
 Ere morning have done the mists away,
 Again through the forest he takes his way.

He wins to the tower at the time of noon,
 The hour when enchantments wane and swoon,
 That work their most with the waxing moon.

The tower stands darkling; on all sides four
 He seeketh it round, as he sought before,
 But no sign seeth of gate or door;

Then stands and calls through the sunlit air,
 "Rapunzel! Sweet one! Down with thy hair!"
 And down, like a fleece, falls the golden stair.

There, full at his feet, is the shining stream,
 A stairway wrought of the gold sun's beam,
 A pathway of price in a fairy dream.

The King's son grippeth the shimmering strand;
 A tress he holdeth in either hand;
 They rise and raise him at his command.

In less than a score of time to tell,
 He wins to the topmost turret-cell;
 He stands by the side of Rapunzel.

Before him standeth a maiden bright,
 With eyes of heaven and locks of light;
 Ne'er live man looked on a lovelier sight.

She gazes on him and he on her;
 The Spring and love in them live and stir,
 Youth's blood aflame with the blossomed year.

Love to love, longing to longing, call;
 They kiss, in each other's arms they fall;
 The night with its curtain covers all.

IV.

Once more, on the morrow, the morning sun,
Arising, ready its course to run,
Awakens from sleep the stout King's son.

He armeth him well against assail,
Himself and his steed from head to tail
In armour of proof of Milan mail.

He giveth him out for bounden war
To wage to the death on the fierce wild boar
That haunteth the heart of the forest core.

The mass of the hunter for him they sing,
Who dareth alone a deathly thing,
Who setteth his life on the venturing.

The cross in the chapel he hath adored;
The priest hath hallowed his broad bright sword,
Hath sacred it o'er with the sign of the Lord.

A ladder of silk he hath letten make,
A ladder of proof, that may not break,
He hath letten twist for his true love's sake.

He hath bounden it on his saddle-bow;
With him is he minded to bear it, so
She win with it may from aloft alow.

But time hastes by and the hour grows late;
The sun hangs high in the noontide strait,
Ere forth he fareth the palace-gate.

Through thorn and thicket again his way
He takes, till the land with the parting ray
Is all adream of the dying day.

To the midwood glade, with the darkling tower,
Where black on the blaze is the maiden's bower,
He wins at the wane of the sunset hour.

He lights, he calls to the maiden fair,
"Rapunzel! Dearest! Down with thy hair!"
And down to his feet floats the fairy stair.

He grips on the tresses, he holds them well;
They bear him aloft to the turret-cell;
Alack! there finds he no Rapunzel.

But there, in the damsel's stead, ah woe!
The witch-wife waiteth, with hair of snow,
With hands like talons and eyes aglow.

She falls on the knight with tooth and nail;
His weapons against her nought avail;
She claws for his heart through his shirt of mail.

She clutches his breast with claws of steel;
Already his limbs the death-sweats feel;
Already his eyes the death-mists seal.

His forces fail him; his heart bleeds sore;
His sense is swooning; he can no more:
Yet but a moment and all is o'er.

But sudden the thought of the holy sign
There thrills through his heart like a levin-shine,
And gripping his blade by the steel so fine,

He calleth aloud on the name of the Lord;
Then strikes at the witch with the cross of the sword,
And dead she drops on the tower-foot sward.

V.

Now blithe is Sir Winfrith, the son of the King;
He hath broughten him home his tenderling;
He hath wedded his bird with book and ring.

He sitteth in joy and him beside,
There sitteth with him his lovesome bride;
No longer lonely he needs must ride;

No longer the linnets to him shall sing,
"Who ever heard tell of the son of a king,
That fareth forlorn in the sunny Spring?"

VI.

Still frowns on the forest the darkling tower;
But never again in the midnight hour
The walls with the flashing tresses flower;

And never again from the turret-cell
The voice of the viewless Rapunzel
Soars up to the sky like a golden bell.

The place of magic is void and mute;
No sound is there, save the throstle's flute,
The nightingale's note and the howlet's hoot;

And never again, in the midnight-air,
The voice of the witch will the silence scare
With "Rapunzel! Minion! Down with thy hair!"

THE ROSES OF SOLOMON.

SOLOMON of ancient story
Of the Lord had roses seven,
Roses of the morning-glory,
Dropping with the dews of heaven.

Angels plucked them in the garden
Of the city high and golden,
Ere the dews had time to harden,
That within their cups were holden,

Into jewels for the adorning
Of the Cherubim immortal,
Of the Chamberlains of Morning,
Of the Seraphs of the Portal.

Flowers from a celestial far land,
With the breath of blessing o'er them,
Woven, gathered in a garland,
Still for benison he bore them.

From the chrysoberyl ceiling
Of his chair of state suspended,
All the air with fragrance filling,
Bright with blossom never ended,

Hung the heaven-descended flowers,
Each its proper boon of blessing,
Each its own enchanted powers
By the grace of God possessing.

Kingship this and domination
 Gave of all the worldly spaces,
 Over every land and nation,
 Over all the tribes and races.

That the dark world's sons and daughters
 Bent to, spirits earthy, airy,
 Angels of the fires and waters,
 Demon, seraph, afrit, fairy.

Empire this which never dieth
 Gave o'er all with life and motion.
 All that creepeth, fareth, flieth
 In the earth and air and ocean.

That command of all the courses
 Gave of land and sea and heaven,
 Winds and waters, flames and forces,
 Sun and moon and planets seven.

This o'er soulless things had power,
 All that sees not, speaks not, hears not,
 Stone and metal, herb and flower,
 Everything that stands and stirs not.

That continuance eternal
 Gave and life that never faded,
 Youth renewing, sempervernal,
 Age and death fore'er evaded.

Sapience the last celestial
 Gave and power all hearts of reading,
 Wit to solve all doubts terrestrial,
 Wisdom for all worldly needing.

With these talismans provided,
 Angel-armed, Naiad-navied,
 Wisdom-warranted, God-guided,
 Who was like the son of David?

All his nights with love he meted,
 All his days with war and kingcraft,
 On the breezes fared and fledged,
 From the birds caught song- and wingcraft;

Moulded Israel to his measure,
 Swayed all Syria, lowlands, highlands,
 Swept the Indian seas for treasure,
 Levied tribute from the islands;

Filled earth's faces with his armies,
 With his navies oared the ocean;
 Made Judæa, vi et armis,
 Laughing as the land of Goshen;

Ceiled his palaces with cedar,
 Garnered pearls and gems for money,
 Dan to Gilead, Gath to Kedar,
 Made the realm run milk and honey.

Never monarch was that flourished
 As did he: with power and praises
 Fed to fulness, pleasure-nourished,
 Glorious in all men's gazes,

In Jerusalem high-built,
 Over all the land prevailing,
 Mid his graven halls and gilded,
 Lapt in love and fame unfailing,

Life on his commandments waiting,
 All its rocky places levelled,
 Nothing lacking, nothing bating,
 Many a year he reigned and revelled:

Till at last, with sweetness sated,
 Tired of thrones and dominations,
 Turned he to the things God hated,
 Followed on abominations:

Worshipped Ishtar, Moloch, Tanit,
 Sought Canopus and Orion,
 Bowed to stock and stone and planet,
 Quite forgot the God of Zion.

Then did Jahveh rise and blast him,
 Beggared him of gifts and graces,
 From his chair of kingship cast him,
 Throned an afrit in his places.

Virtue all forsook the roses;
 Withered weeds, from heaven banished,
 For the Paradisal closes
 Languishing, they pined and vanished.

What of David's son remained is?
 All his greatness, all his glory,
 How he revelled, how he reigned, is
 Nothing now but idle story.

ENGLAND'S HOPE.

(KITCHENER OF KHARTOUM.)

WHELP of the lion-breed of Wellington;
Careless to fit the date unto the deed
Or trumpet forth, that all who run may read,
His valiant worth to every mother's son;
In the lost field, as in the victory won,
Steadfast alike, unrecking whose the meed,
So but the achievement of his country's need
And honour saved attend on duty done:
Diluting action not with vain debate;
Contemtuuous of Fortune's good and ill;
Not blown about, as is the unstable soul,
Hither and thither with each shift of fate,
But constant as the compass to the pole,
Fast founded on th'unconquerable will.

Nov. 1900.

SARVARTHASIDDHA-BUDDHA.

I.

THE desert of the unaccomplished years
Fills the round compass of our careful eyes
And still, from age to age, the same suns rise
And life troops past, a masque of smiles and tears:
The same void hopes vie with the same vain fears
And in the grey sad circuit of the skies,
To the monotonous music of our sighs,
We plod toward the goal that never nears.

Ah, who shall solve us of the dreary days,
The unlived life and the tormenting dreams,
That on the happy blank of easeful night
Paint evermore for us the backward ways
And the old mirage, with its cheating streams,
And urge us back into the unwon fight?

II.

We turn for comfort to the wise of old,
For tidings of the land that lies ahead,
The land to which their firmer feet have led,
Hymning its shores of amethyst and gold.
We ask; the answer comes back stern and cold;
"Gird up your loins! Rest is not for the dead.
"Beyond the graveyard and the evening-red,
"New lives and ever yet new lives unfold."

Ye speak in vain. If rest be not from life,
What reck we of new worlds and clearer air,
Of brighter suns and skies of deeper blue,
If life and all its weariness be there?
Is there no sage of all we turn unto
Will guide us to the guerdon of our strife?

III.

Yes, there is one: for the sad sons of man,
That languish in the deserts, travail-worn,
Five times five hundred years ago was born,
Under those Orient skies, from whence began
All light, a saviour from the triple ban
Of birth and death and life renewed forlorn.
Third of the Christs he came to those who mourn:
Prometheus, Hercules had led the van.

His scriptures were the forest and the fen:
From the dead flower he learnt and the spent night
The lesson of the eternal nothingness,
How what is best is ceasing from the light
And putting off life's raiment of duress,
And taught it to the weary race of men.

IV.

He did not mock the battle-broken soul
With promise of vain heavens beyond the tomb,
As who should think to break the boding gloom
Of stormful skies, uplifting to the pole
Gilt suns and tinsel stars. Unto their dole,
Who batten on life's galls, he knew no doom
Is dread as that which in death's darkling womb
Rewrites life's endless and accurséd scroll.

Wherefore he taught that to abstain is best,
Seeing that to those, who have their hope in nought,
Peace quicker comes and that eternal rest,
Wherein enspheréd thou, Siddartha, art,
Chief of the high sad souls that sit apart,
Throned in their incommunicable thought.

OMAR KHEYYAM.

O THOU, the Orient morning's nightingale,
That, from the darkness of the Long Ago,
Thy note of unpropitiable woe
Cast'st out upon the Time-travèrsing gale,
— Its burden still Life's lamentable tale,
Too late come hither and too soon to go,
Whence brought and whither bounden none doth know
Nor why thrust forth into this world of wail, —
We, thy sad brethren of the Western lands,
SONS OF THE SECRET of this latter day,
We, who have sailed with thee the sea of tears,
Have trod with thee the BLOOD-DEVOURING WAY,
We, thy soul's mates, with thee join hearts and hands
Across the abysses of eight hundred years.

1898.

IN MEMORIAM

OLIVER MADOX BROWN

ob. Nov. 5, 1874.

FRIEND, whom I loved in those few years and fleeting
The envious fates, which hound all things that be
From death to birth, appointed thee and me
To be together in the nether air
Of this our world of care,
Swift severance and brief and seldom meeting,
I cry to thee with one last word of greeting,
Across the darkness and the unknown sea.

With one last word I cry to thee, my brother,
One word of love and memory and grief,
That on thy grave, even as an autumn leaf
Fallen from the tree of my sad soul, all sere
With winter drawing near,
May lie, for lack of rose or lys or other
Bloom of the Spring or Summer, that our mother
Hath ta'en from me, to fill her funeral sheaf,—

Our mother Death: for thou too knewst of sadness,
Even in the brief sweet season of thy Spring;
Ay, and the stroke of thine upmounting wing,
Thus early pointing to the eternal height,
Even in its callowest flight,
Bore thee far up above men's careless gladness
Into those realms of lone, yet glorious madness,
Where all God's poets suffer, see and sing.

I cry into the dark with lamentation,
 A cry of grief and love-longing and pain
 For lack of that rich heart and teeming brain,
 Which, had not envious Fate denied, were fain
 To soar to such a strain
 As should have gladdened folk in many a nation
 And made men's hearts flower full with jubilation,
 Even as the roses in the summer rain:

Yea, and regret for him my friend departed,
 For solace lost to me and friendly cheer
 And sympathy that made the world less drear,
 Regret and memory and bitter dole
 For that bright noble soul,
 Swift-spirited, yet true and tender-hearted,
 With whom full many a joy and pain I parted,
 In that brief season he was with us here.

Ah, what is left, from Death's supreme surrender,
 Of that bright wit, to all fair ends attuned,
 That vaulting thought, which soared nor ever swooned
 Nor drooped its pinions in the ethereal air
 Of noble dreams and fair?

Only for us, to whom no prayers can render
 Thy presence or thy heart so true and tender,
 Memory abides, to solace and to wound.

Thou shalt not be of those whom Time effaces,
 Whilst yet the mould is moist above their head,
 Whose memories fade and pass and all is said;
 Nay, for us all, who loved thee and who love,
 Shining life's fret above,
 Thy thought shall throne it in our hearts' high places,
 Till Death blot past and present from our faces;
 Thou shalt not be of the forgotten dead.

Thy face in many a page of mystic poet
 Shall haunt me and thy voice in many a strain
 Of strange sad music, to whose weird refrain
 Our souls made answer with so whole a might
 Of delicate delight
 We grudged well-nigh that any else should know it,
 Should bear its frail fair seed abroad and sow it,
 To wither on the general heart and brain.

Thy speech, with all its high and generous passion
 For noble things, its scorn of all untruth,
 And all the dainty blossom of thy youth,
 Thy youth oft wiser than my ripper age,
 Shall on the picturing page
 Of memory itself anew refashion
 And live, though time on thee took no compassion
 And Death on us thy lovers had no ruth.

What though no power on earth avail to move thee
 To sight or speech of any mother's son,
 Thee, that art shut from sight of moon and sun?
 For me, thy high sweet spirit, like a flower,
 In this memorial hour,
 Pierces the grass-grown earth that lies above thee;
 Thou knewst I loved thee and thou knowst I love thee;
 And in that knowledge still our souls are one.

And if thy life's untimely ended story,
 Thy life so thick with many an early bloom
 And seed of blooms yet brighter, hold no room,
 For very ratheness, in the inconstant ken
 Of quick-forgetting men,
 Yet, for our hearts, though Time himself grow hoary,
 The lily of love, if not the rose of glory,
 Shall flower and fade not on thy timeless tomb.

SALUT D'AMOUR.

LOVE of leafy days,
Whilst the summer stays,
Whilst the fields are golden and the skies are blue,
I am sure of you.
Whilst the sunshine plays
In the scented ways
And the world is new,
In the glory of your gaze,
Sweet of summer, Love looks through.

Then I hold you, joy of June,
When the woods burst out in tune
And the marigolds are shining with their mirrors of the sun,
When the day and night are one,
When the sunlight's golden shoon
And the silver-sandalled moon
After one another run,
Through the pearl and opal cloisters of the sky,
Like a youth and maid that fly
From each other nor draw nigh
But at morning and at evening, when the twilight is begun.

Bird of August skies,
Love that never dies,
Whilst the sunshine lingers, harbours on your brow;
Still the love-looks rise
In your happy eyes:
Hap what may when winter rages,
In your breast when frosty age is
And the bleak and surly snowtime turns your blood to ice,
Now, at least, whilst throstles tarry and the blossom's on
the bough,
Ours is present Paradise:
Come what will, you love me now.

EPILOGUE

TO THE BOOK OF THE THOUSAND NIGHTS
AND ONE NIGHT.

TWELVE years this day,—a day of winter, dreary
With drifting snows, when all the world seemed dead
To Spring and hope,—it is since, worn and weary
Of doubt within and strife without, I fled

From the mean workday miseries of existence,
From spites that slander and from hates that lie,
Into the dreamland of the Orient distance,
Under the splendours of the Syrian sky,

And in the enchanted realms of Eastern story,
Far from the lovelessness of modern times,
Garnered the rainbow-remnants of old glory
That linger yet in those ancestral climes.

And now, the long task done, the journey over,
From that far home of immemorial calms,
Where, as a mirage, on the sky-marge hover
The desert and its pleasaunces of palms,

Lingering, I turn me back, with eyes reverted,
To this stepmother world of daily life,
As one by some long lovesome dream deserted,
That wakes anew to dull unseemly strife.

Yet, if none other weal the quest have wrought me,
The long beloved labour now at end,
This gift of gifts the untravelled East hath brought me,
The knowledge of a new and valued friend.

5th Feb., 1889.

DUST TO DUST.

DEAREST, when I am dead,
Fold not this form of mine
In webs of wool or silk or linen fine;
Nay, pillow not my head,
When there is no more breath in me, on down
Nor my cold brows with flowers funereal crown.
Coffin me not in epicedial elm;
Let them not seal
My slumbering sense with straitening bands nor whelm
My weary body in sepulchral steel.
Be not my breathless breast
With the accurséd winding-sheet opprest;
Let them not lap my nerveless limbs in lead
Nor nail me down,
Wound, like a wine-flask, in some woolly fleece,
Within the choking chest.
Indeed, I could not rest,
Enchained and prisoned in that narrow bed;
I could not sleep
Until the term of time be oversped
Nor slumber out the appointed years in peace,
If left to strangle in that darkling deep.

Lay me not in the ground,
In some sad city of the nameless dead,
Whose heaped-up hosts should let me from the light,
Where all about me, under, overhead,
Their million multitudes, untold, unknown,
Encompassing me round,
Pressing and crowding on me day and night,

To all eternity should elbow me
 And straiten me beneath my funeral stone.
 Enough in life it was with men to be,
 To see
 Their smileless faces pass me in the ways,
 To meet
 Their senseless eyes, wherein my wistful gaze
 Could note no noble heat,
 No hope of heavenly things, no care of right,
 No heed of aught that is not bought and sold,
 No thought, no wish, except the greed of gold.
 Fain in my death from them I would be free:
 Let them not mar the eternal rest for me,
 Enforcing me the unvictorious fight
 Fight on and on for all eternity,
 Who hunger for deliverance at last
 From the base present and the bitter past.

Not in the earth me lay:
 I would not moulder lingeringly away
 Within the stifling clay
 Nor cower helpless in corruption's hold,
 Midmost the darkness and the nether cold,
 A prison-palsied prey
 To the mean creatures of the middle earth.
 I would not have my rottenness affray
 Each delicate flower-birth
 And cause it shun my foulness of decay.
 I could not brook to think
 The lilies or the violets should shrink
 From my pollution, leaving the fat weed
 And the base creatures that corruptions breed
 Alone upon my festering flesh to feed,
 Nor that the primrose or the cowslip's root,

Delving with dainty foot
 In the earth's bosom for its sustenance,
 Should flinch and shrivel from my funeral stance,
 Deeming my mouldering dust not fair and good
 Enough to be its food.

Nay, leave me overground;
 Let me not lie to perish and to pine
 Under the mould in some sepulchral mound;
 But lay me, leave me in the open air;
 On some wild moorland or some mountain bare,
 Upon Helvellyn's crown or Snowdon's chine
 Cast down these bones of mine.
 There let me moulder underneath the skies;
 Let the birds batten on my brain and eyes,
 The wild fox tear me and the forest swine.
 Yea, let me wither in the wind and rain;
 The air shall purge me and the sun from stain;
 The rains shall wash away
 The soil of death, defilement and decay
 And the breeze blow me clean and pure and white:
 Nothing shall be in me to soil the sight,
 To fright the fancy or the sense affray.
 The winds shall be the playmates of my dust,
 As in the air they waft it near and far;
 The grass its spear-spikes through my ribs shall thrust
 And the sweet influences of night and day
 Look loving on me, sun and moon and star.
 Yea, better far to wither in the wind,
 To wait the fulness of the days assigned,
 In the fair face of sky and stars and sun,
 To feed the flying and the faring things,
 The creatures in the grass that creep and run,
 To scatter on the birds' and breezes' wings,

To mingle with the sunshine and the rain
 And with my breeze-borne ashes germ on germ
 Of herb and grass and weed
 To birth of beauty ever and again
 To bring and help to harvest grain and seed,
 Than in the clay to moulder, heart and brain,
 The creatures of corruption there to breed,
 To rot out tediously the ruthless term
 And in the dark to feed
 The foul blind beetle and the writhing worm.

There, in the sight of sky and moon and sun,
 The elements shall garner, one by one,
 Each gift, each grace they gave,
 To make this body brave;
 Let the four work-mates, earth, fire, water, air,
 Resume again from me
 That which I had of them and leave me bare;
 Let all my parts again be what they were,
 Before the fiat fell for me to be.

There, in the course of many a day and night,
 Some gentian of the height,
 Some rose, belike, shall blossom from my clay;
 Some amaryllis of the wind-swept hills,
 Some pansy, purple as the morning's sills,
 Some fragrant flush of meadow-sweet, some white
 Celestial lily of the morning-light,
 Borne, yet in germ, upon the gracious gale,
 Whereas I waste away,
 The effluences of wordless wistfulness
 And longing love shall smell,
 The overmastering spell
 Of passion disembodied and desire
 Purged and made pure of life's polluting stress

Mark, that my ashes on the air exhale,
 Nor their sweet seeds and frail
 Fear to the bosom of my love to trust,
 Electing so to blossom from my dust
 And their fair brightness found in my decay.

So shall I one anew
 Be with the natural things I held so dear,
 One with the sunshine and the waters clear,
 One with the larks and linnets, flowers and grass,
 Mountain and moor and torrent, herb and tree,
 The candid creatures of the air and dew.
 Nay, in the days to be,
 It peradventure yet may come to pass
 That, as your free foot strays
 Along the moorland or the mountain-ways,
 Noting the shadows in the brooklet's glass
 Or following on the interlacing rays
 That chase each other through the tangled trees,
 Mayhap it shall be yours to recognize
 My spirit in the bird-notes and the breeze,
 My face in flowers, my thought in butterflies,
 The subtle scions of the sun and skies:
 Belike, some wandering breath
 Of perfume, in the summer air afloat,
 Shall to your senses speak of me in death:
 Yea, by the brooklet straying, you shall note
 Some bloom of gold or blue,
 Some riverside ranunculus, of me
 That haply shall remember you, shall see
 Some flowering weed look on you with my eyes
 Or hear
 Some windwaft murmur of me in your ear,
 Some birdsong answer with my speech to you.

VERE NOVO.

OUT in my little garden
The crocus is a-flame;
The hyacinth-buds harden;
The birds no more are tame;
No more are they the same
That, in the sad snow-season,
Their Kyrie Eleison
Sang at my window-frame;
Lark, linnet, throstle, ousel,
With carol and carousal
For food to me that came.

The winter's woes are over;
My cats upon the wall,
Gruff, Top, Shireen and Rover,
Are basking, one and all.
Soon will the cuckoo call
His "Summer, summer's coming!"
Soon will the bees be humming
About the tulips tall.
The lilac-buds are breaking;
A new blithe world is waking,
To gladden great and small.

I look on all things' gladness,
 Half-gladdened, half opprest;
 Delight at once and sadness
 Debate it in my breast.
 From out their winter's nest
 My thoughts peep out at Springtime,
 Misdoubting of their wing-time,
 If sleep or wake be best;
 For in me are two voices,
 Whereof the one rejoices,
 The other sighs for rest.

I know the old Spring story,
 That stirs in every flower;
 How Life grows never hoary,
 But sleeps to gather power;
 Then, with some passing shower,
 Its face it laves from slumber
 And casting off sleep's cumber,
 Blooms forth in field and bower,
 Unresting, still renewing,
 For evermore ensuing
 The ever-fleeting hour.

Ah Spring, thou tell'st me ever
 The same contentless tale,
 How spirit may not sever
 Fore'er from body frail,
 How, though the old forms fail,
 In others yet imprisoned,
 The soul, anew bedizened
 With webs of joy and wail,
 Still from the future's pages
 Must spell, through endless ages,
 Life's script of weal and bale.

I cannot dight my dreaming
 To fit thy frolic glee;
 Thy sweet, thy simple seeming,
 Thine eager ecstasy
 Are dulled with doubt for me.

I, who am heavy-hearted
 For days and hopes departed,
 I cannot joy with thee,
 Unthoughtful, for the present,
 Because to-day is pleasant,
 Of Past and of To-be.

Yet, who shall still go glooming,
 When Spring is on the stair,
 When every bough is blooming
 And every field is fair?
 I stand in the soft air
 And watch the grasses growing
 And feel the March-breeze blowing
 Away my winter's care.
 A peace, as of sunseting,
 Is on me, a forgetting
 Of joys and griefs that were.

This is the Springtide's magic:
 Needs must, when April's nigh,
 Its mask of winter tragic
 The hardest heart lay by;
 Beneath its watchet sky
 The saddest soul despairing,
 The coldest thought leave caring
 To question how or why;
 Content, while each day's bringing
 New birds, new blossoms springing,
 To live and not to die.

PRELUDE TO HAFIZ.

HITHER, hither, o ye weary, o ye sons of wail and woe,
Ye, who've proved the hollow shimmer of this world of
 fleeting show,
Ye, who've seen your hearts' hopes vanish, like the first-
 lings of the snow;

Ye, who scorn the brutal bondage of this world of misbelief,
Ye, who bear the royal blazon of the heart afire with grief,
Hearken, hearken to my calling; for I proffer you relief.

I am he whom men call teller of the things that none may see,
Tongue of speech of the Unspoken, I am he that holds the key
Of the treasures of vision and the mines of mystery.

I am he that knows the secrets of the lands beyond the goal,
I am he that solves the puzzles of the sorrow-smitten soul,
I am he that giveth gladness from the wine-enlightened bowl.

I am he that heals the wounded and the weary of their scars,
I am Hafiz, son of Shiraz, in the pleasant land of Fars,
Where I flung my flouting verses in the faces of the stars.

See, my hands are full of jewels from the worlds beyond the
 tomb:
Here be pearls of perfect passion from the middle dream-
 land's womb;
Here be amethysts of solace, for the purging of your gloom:

Here be rubies red and radiant, of the colour of the heart,
 Here be topazes sun-golden, such as rend the dusk apart,
 Here be sapphires steeped in heaven, for the salving of
 your smart.

If your souls are sick with sorrow, here is that which shall
 appease;

If your lips are pale with passion, here is that which hath
 the keys

To the sanctuaries of solace and the halidomes of ease.

Let the bigot tend his idols, let the trader buy and sell:
 Ears are theirs that cannot hearken to the tale I have to tell,
 Eyes that cannot see the treasures which are open to my spell.

Where is he that's heavy-laden? Lo, my hand shall give
 him peace.

Where are they that dwell in darkness? I am he that can
 release.

Where is he that's world-bewildered? I will give his cares
 surcease.

Hither, hither with your burdens! I have that shall make
 them light.

I have salves shall purge the earth-mists from the fountains
 of your sight;

I have spells shall raise the morning in the midst of your
 night.

Come, o doubt-distracted brother! Come, o heavy-burthened
 one!

Come to me and I will teach you how the goal of rest is won;
 Come and I will cleave your darkness with the splendours
 of the sun.

Leave your striving never-ending; let the weary world go by;
Let its bondmen hug their fetters, let its traders sell and buy;
With the roses in the garden we will sojourn, you and I.

Since the gladness and the sadness of the world alike are
nought,
I will give you wine to drink of from the ancient wells of
thought,
Where it's lain for ages ripening, whilst the traders sold and
bought.

What is heaven, that we should seek it? Wherefore question
How or Why?

See, the roses are in blossom; see, the sun is in the sky;
See, the land is lit with summer; let us live before we die.

1901.

REQUIEM

FOR OUR DEAD IN SOUTH AFRICA.

Their bodies are buried in peace; but their
name liveth for evermore.

Ecclesiasticus, XLIV, 14.

HAPPY are our dead that on the veldt are sleeping,
Our dear-belovéd dead, that died for England's sake!

They weary not, as we who watch and wake,
To follow on the war-tide's ebb and flow,
The fluctuant fight against the faithless foe,
Nor hear the widows and the orphans weeping.
Upon their graves the shadows come and go;
Their quiet sleep no battle-thunders break,
No shouts of jubilance, no wails of woe:
Their seed of sacrifice and duty shed
Upon the embattled field and with the red
Of their young hearts' blood watered, they lie low
And are content to sleep and wait the reaping:
They are at peace beneath the moonbeams creeping;
They feel the sunblaze not upon their head;
They shiver not beneath the winter's snow.
They need no pity; all with them is well;
O'er them the stars the eternal watch are keeping,
The reflux tides of heaven wane and swell;
The reverent skies rain softly on their bed:
Far oversea, beyond the wild waves' leaping,
They rest in peace, our well-belovéd dead.

Happy are our dead, that oversea are lying,
Our faithful dead, that fought and died to hold us true!

They do not hear the rude reviling crew,
They hearken not the venal nations vying
In slander each with each and vilifying
Of that magnanimous England who of yore
Wrought for their fathers in the front of war;

Who waded for their sakes through seas of gore,
 Pouring like water forth her blood and store,—
 England, with Sidney, Howard, Drake, who drew,
 To free them from the fire and axe of Spain,
 Her seraph-sword unconquerable, who,
 With Blake and Marlborough, Nelson, Wellington,
 From age to age her battle-banner on
 Bearing, the braggart Bourbon overthrew
 And drove his harlot-pander cohorts flying,
 Who to the succour came of Europe sighing
 Under the brute Republic's bloody reign,
 Who loosed them from Napoleon's iron chain;
 England, who heard and answered to their crying
 So many a time of old and gave them bread;—
 —These, who, as beasts that bite the hand which fed
 And give for good, as is the churl's use, bane,
 Bark at her heels like bandogs,—who, in vain
 Fair arms and fairly used in loyal fight
 Knowing against her archangelic might,
 Catch up the dastard's weapons, filthy lying
 And shameless slander, and withal adread
 Lest she should turn and rend them, from afar
 Hail their envenomed shafts upon her head,
 Thinking to whelm her with the poisoned rain,—
 Her tangled in a world-involving war;—
 These at her heels who follow, fleeing, nighing,
 Wolves at once fearful of the chase and fain,
 Whilst she, proud Titan, scornful of replying,
 Upon her path imperial of domain
 Fares tireless on with her unfaltering tread,
 The unsetting sun upon her radiant crest
 A crown that cleaves the darkness East and West,
 Nor heeds the yelping of the jackal train.
 Happy are our dead, thrice happy in their dying,

In that their ears are deaf to all is said!
 They sleep in peace upon the Afric plain;
 No thunders stir their slumbers nor the hum
 Of torrent-waters of the tropic rain:
 They wait the fulness of the days to come,
 When what they've sown shall gathered be for grain,
 Nor hearken to the enviers decrying
 The righteous cause for which they fought and bled.
 They tarry for the harvest's testifying:
 'Tis well with them, our well-belovéd dead.

Happy are our dead, o'er whom the grass is growing,
 Our noble dead, who fought and fell for liberty!
 Our England's arm who were, from oversea
 Six thousand miles outstretched for the bestowing
 Of life upon the sad sons of the soil,
 Who braved the ambush and the battle-clash,
 Hunger and thirst and death and dearth and toil
 Direr than death, to set the bondman free,
 To save him from the bullet and the lash,—
 Who blenched not from the bitterest undergoing,
 The slave to succour and their human spoil
 To rescue from the ruthless Dopper dogs,
 The spawn of Holland, with the Bushman hogs
 Blood-blended! Where, to all eternity,
 They lie and sleep beneath the waste-winds' blowing,
 They neither mark the mopping and the mowing
 Of the sour apes, who, to their country's shame,
 For that their rivals in the seats they see
 Themselves must void for incapacity,
 Spit forth their spite upon our England's name,
 Their native land far rather in the mire
 Than themselves choosing forced to the foregoing
 Of their base aims and baulked of their desire,—

Nor heed the tattling of the traitor horde,
 Who, to feed full their raging vanity,
 Their vile vainglorious appetites to stay
 And fill their lust of hate to overflowing,
 With the foul foe for England's overthrowing
 Confederate, fain would blunt her conquering sword
 And maim her forearm. But what matter they?
 What skill such screech-owls in the imperial choir
 Of England's praise, that, like a living lyre,
 Circles the echoing world from East to West,
 Hailing her harbinger of peace and truth,
 Sword of the just and shield of the opprest,
 Time-honoured temperer of wrath with ruth?
 Yet, happy, happy are our dead, unknowing
 The shame our own have heaped upon our head,
 The tares which these have mingled with their sowing
 Who died for duty at their country's hest,
 Tares with their wheat which shall be harvested,
 To feed the future world with bitter bread!
 'Tis well they know it not; 'twould stir their rest
 Untimely, ere the appointed days be sped,
 The term of time fulfilled and truth's forthshowing:
 'Tis well they sleep, our dear and sacred dead.

Happy are our dead, that in our hearts are living,
 Our holy dead, who died to hold us true and great!
 Whatever lie beyond the years in wait,
 Whatever webs the future may be weaving,
 Theirs shall the glory be, for theirs the giving.
 'Twas they that stemmed for us the storm of hate;
 'Twas they that turned for us the tides of Fate;
 Ours was the wreck; but theirs was the retrieving;
 They gave us all and asked for no returning,
 Fought on nor looked to know the darkness burning

With the bright signs of morning or to see
 The dayspring and the dawn of victory.
 Enough their faith for them and the believing
 That England never from her fair estate
 Should fail whilst yet her lion brood should be,
 Each breast a bulwark in her foremost gate,
 Strong with the strength of duty for the achieving
 Of the impossible by land and sea,
 Each one a little England, unafraid
 To face the world in arms, where England bade.
 Theirs is the triumph; ours is the bereaving;
 The trophy theirs; ours but the broken blade,
 The bloodstained arms, for love and memory laid,
 Wet with our weeping, on the narrow bed
 Whereas our heroes sleep, of doubt and dread
 Absolved, of sorry thought and sad conceiving.
 So leave we them to rest; but, in the leaving,
 Let not their perfect peace our mourning mar;
 Let not our tears upon their triumph jar.
 They live and shall not die! Whilst England stands
 Upon the Eastern and the Western strands,
 The light of virtue haloing her head,
 Crowned, from the morning to the evening-red,
 Queen of the Orient and the Austral lands,
 The memory of their deeds shall never die:
 Whilst "England liveth yet!" it shall be said,
 Defying Time that maketh low and high,
 This one downsetting still and that upheaving,
 They shall live on with England. Far and nigh,
 Their names shall shine as polestars in her sky,
 Till she and all her memories are sped.
 Leave them to rest; there is no need of grieving.
 Sleep on in peace, our unforgotten dead!

Jan., 1902.

NOCTURN.

THE moon looks in upon me through the casement
And creeping round to where I lie at gaze,
Wide-eyed, and wait in vain coy sleep's embracement,
Upon my face her ghostly fingers lays.

I know that sign; she wills me rise and follow
Her feet; she lures me with her lamp of white,
Till at the window, o'er the wooded hollow,
I stand and look upon the silver night.

Pale lies the world and pure as a dead maiden;
No birdsong breaks the silence, thrush or merle:
The woodlands lie and slumber, heavy-laden
With dreams, beneath a dreaming sea of pearl.

From out that moony sea how many a hoping
Fain would I raise, that is for ever sped;
I go among old memories seeking, groping
For what I know is buried with the dead.

Still the moon calls me. What to wait availeth
For sleep unanswering? Better forth to go,
To wander 'twere, before her fair light faileth,
Before her horn th' horizon dips below.

White moon, thou ever wast my friend and lover;
Ne'er have I asked in vain for aid from thee;
Still all my toils and troubles didst thou cover
And drown'dst my sorrows in thy silver sea.

The doors stand barless all; the gates are gaping;
 The ways are open to the open night,
 Fulfilled with figures of the moonlight's shaping:
 So forth I fare into a world of white.

In the wild park I stray, where all is sleeping,
 Save in the dreaming avenue of elms,
 Where down the moonlit aisles the ghosts are sweeping,
 That may not rest in sleep's sepulchral realms.

Like me, they watch and wake whilst all else sleepeth;
 Like me, the backward, not the forward ways,
 They tread; like me, they sow when all else reapeth;
 Like me, they love the nights and not the days.

Like me, outsetting know they, not arriving;
 Like me, the night's their day, the moon their sun;
 Like me, for ever, ever are they striving
 To make the done undone, the undone done.

Among the ghosts I wander, dreaming, deeming,
 Mid ghosts and dreams myself a dreaming ghost,
 In the loud world of men a thing of seeming,
 A wandering wraith amid a living host.

The silence solace brings to thought and feeling;
 The quiet fills my bleeding heart with balm;
 The moon upon my wounds pours oils of healing;
 My cares are half-forgotten in the calm.

But lo! across the hills the dark is breaking;
 The breeze of dawn sighs shrilly through the trees;
 The world, so sweet that slept and dreamt, is waking,
 To run its round of travail and unease.

And thou, who needs must wake, whilst others slumber,
Who, whilst all rest, the weapon-watch must keep,
Will the blue morning quit thee of thy cumber?
Shall the day wind thee in the woofs of sleep?

Nay, for thou ever wast a doubter, dreamer,
And he whose feet the paths of vision tread
Was ever out of grace with Sleep the Seemer;
She hath no crown of poppies for his head.

BARCAROLLE.

OUT sails to the fresh breeze!
My heart
Pines for the open seas.
The soft moon flowers, like a dream-delight,
Over the full tide-flow.
Shake out the sails! Sweetheart, we will depart,
We will depart and sail the seas to-night,
Whilst on the foam that flees
The blithe breeze flutters and the weed floats slow,
The moon above us and the tide below.

Where shall we steer to-night?
The moon
Lies, like a lane of white,
Far out beyond our vision in the West,
Over the dreaming sea,
As if some goddess walked with silver shoon
Deepening the dimples of each white-winged crest.
Sweetheart, the way is bright:
Shall we trim sails and follow it till we
Win to some shimmering world of fantasy?

Folk hold we chase a dream;
They say
That the bright worlds, which beam
Beyond the setting and the dying day,
Are shows begotten of the air and light,

Delusions distance-woven for the sight,
 Mere mirages, that seem
 And flee before us with unceasing flight:
 We lose our lives, they tell us, following
 A vain, unreal thing.

"Twere better far to bide
 On shore,
 To delve the round earth's side
 For diamonds and golden glittering store
 And in the strife for wealth and worldly praise
 Join, heaping up the treasure of the days
 With great and goodly store
 Of what men follow in the mortal ways;
 Since, as they say, these only real are
 And all things else unreal as a star.

What matter what they say?
 We *know*
 That which on dullards' way
 They prate but of, as idiots do, who go,
 Strange spells and magic words without comprize
 Reciting, which, if spoken wizard-wise,
 Would overthrow
 The world and rend with ruin earth and skies:
 We soar, whilst here below they herd like sheep;
 We waken, whilst they sleep.

For them, dull life once o'er,
 They lie
 And rot for evermore;
 There is no part of them but all must die,
 Since all their thoughts are earthy as their dust,

Their spirits as their bodies rust in rust;
 No hope have they, on high
 To raise them, but for ever perish must:
 What shall avail to lift them from the grave
 Of all that here they crave?

With them what shall they bear
 Away,
 Into the nether air,
 Of all the goods they garner night and day?
 Shall they regild death's darkness with their gold?
 Shall their wealth warm them in the utter cold,
 Their honour cleave the clay?
 Will the worm do them worship in the mould?
 Nay, earth to earth and dust to dust must back;
 With life, all else shall lack.

But we, whose kingdom is not of the earth,
 Whose weal
 No world of death and birth
 Might work nor fill the yearnings that we feel,
 Our visions overlasting life and death,
 Our dreams that cease not with the 'scape of breath,
 From us death cannot steal
 The splendour and the fulness of our faith;
 We bear with us into the realms of Night
 The seeds of life and light.

Not of the dust our hope,
 Our thought,
 That soars beyond earth's scope.
 If here it gain the glories not it sought,
 Itself its warrant is that such things are,

That the bright visions, here from us afar
 Which flee, are not for nought;
 Nay, though it be beyond the topmost star,
 Our dreams, that seem delusions, simple sooth
 Are in the air of truth.

Since here our each desire,
 Fulfilled,
 Becomes a wasting fire,
 A mocking counterfeit of what we willed,
 Thrice happy they who chase some Golden Fleece,
 Beyond man's wit, who seek without surcease
 Some vision that they build,
 Some lovely land of everlasting peace,
 Who, after some divinest dream, o'erstray
 The strands of night and day!

Come, then, launch out with me
 And steer
 Into the shoreless sea!
 Shake out the sails and follow without fear
 Into the distance and the golden West!
 We yet shall sight the Islands of the Blest;
 We yet the Hesperian Gardens of our quest
 Shall compass, if not here,
 In this our world of ravin and unrest,
 Then in those lands of a serener air
 Where truth alone is fair.

ARCADES AMBO.

BIRDS at morning-red
Each to other said,
"See, the winter's over;
Soon it will be Spring."
But, before the night,
All the world was white
And each feathered rover
For the South a-wing.

Quoth my heart one day,
"Love is come to stay:
Soul, have done with sorrow;
Give thyself to glee."
But, ere day was done,
Light Love with the sun
Fled, and on the morrow,
Woe, ah woe was me!

Quoth the bud at morn,
"With my girth of thorn,
Who shall do me evil?
Am I not the rose?"
But, alack to tell!
Ere the midnight fell,
Came a frost uncivil
And the blossom froze.

Quoth I to my soul,
"Thou hast reached thy goal:
Me no more importune
With thy doubts and fears."
But, ere I had spoken,
Lo! the spell was broken;
With a back-blow, Fortune
Turned my smiles to tears.

LITANY.

NIGHT and day and work and play, time and toil and thrall,
Shade and sun for all and one, death for one and all:

Watch and ward and chain and cord, rose and thorn and rue,
Fence and fate and bolt and gate; time and thought fare
through.

Smile and tear and hope and fear still for you and me;
Love and life and sleep and strife; faith alone wins free.

Day and night and dark and light, sea and shore and sky,
Wealth and dearth: farewell to earth! Time it is to die.

Life and Love about, above, flutter to and fro;
Long they're sought and once they're caught, time it is to go.

All as one, the ripe years run, hasten to the night:
Feed thy fill, whilst lingers still, still a little light.

Hap and hope! In heaven's scope is how many a star!
Thick as bees they swarm and these even as we are.

What availing is in wailing or in railing, what?
If Life's weaving be deceiving, death shall cut the knot.

Joy is folly, melancholy idle: better be
Sea-birds sleeping on the leaping billows of the sea.

What's to do with me and you, in this world of dream?
Moth and fly are you and I, motes in the sun-beam.

Strife and seeming, doubt and deeming, let them play
 their play,
 Let them flutter out their utter term and pass away.

If thy bosom bear a blossom, cherish it and heed
 Not the jealous fools that tell us Love is but a weed.

Pain and pleasant, past and present, future, friend and foe,
 All Life's weaving, glee and grieving, must thou leave and go.

Wheel and windle, spool and spindle, let them weave and spin;
 Let them wind us what assigned us is, day out, day in.

Sweet and bitter, gold and flitter, all must have its day;
 Little matter on Life's platter what for us they lay.

Vain contending, world-amending, dreams of sleep and wake:
 Life's whole beauty is in duty done for duty's sake.

Cease thy sighing: day is dying, see, in yonder West:
 Yet a little, in sleep's spital thou, too, shalt have rest.

LOVE SOLICITOUS.

LOVE, perfect love,
The loved Apostle tells us, casts out fear.
Ah, thou belovéd of the Lord, that hate
Nor doubt spiteful knewest, being here,
 Whose hopes in heaven above
Alone had harbourage, who still await
Watched for Christ's coming through the golden gate
Of morn miraculous, straining with bent ear
For the first trumps of the Accepted Year,
 What should thy heart, elate
With the sure hope of heaven at hand and near,
Know of the iron laws of loveless Fate,
 Which ban content and cheer
From those who anywhat on earth hold dear,
Dooming them still misdoubt, all else above,
The loss of that they cherish, soon or late,
So fearlessness their joys may have for mate
Nor peace? Peace! What hath that celestial dove,
Which broodeth but on Faith's serener sphere,
 To do with Love?
In this our sorry scheme of things create,
Is not incertitude Love's born estate?
Are not its sacrifices sigh and tear?
Is it not unto doubt as hand to glove?

He better knew
The laws and statutes of Love's mystery,
The Roman singer, in like time with thee,
By the cold shores of the Cimmerian Sea

Who lived and sighed for Latium's skies of blue

And his lost love's embrace ;

Or he, the Tusculan, who did abase,

In the last days of Rome's democracy,

His golden speech the senseless populace

To raise rebellious 'gainst the Fates' decree

Which bids these servants and those masters be.

Well of Love's ordinance he wotted who,

Far from the loved sight of his lady's face,

Weaving his wreaths of rue,

Love all fulfilled of anxious fear ¹⁾ did see ;

Or he

Who, yearning back unto his youthful case,

When all the world was new

In his new eyes and over lawn and lea

The pleasant hours the pleasanter did chase,

Love all for sorrow and anxiety, ²⁾

Solicitude unceasing, did beshrew,

Inapt for those who run the worldly race,

Concernless being never nor care-free,

To one and all untrue.

Yet, who were fain,

For all Love's miseries and all affrays,

To think that he its ravishments had missed?

Who would for woe desist

From loving? Who, because he'd felt Love's bane,

Would, in his loveless age, that he had kissed

And clipt in brighter days forget again!

For lightning-stroke and thunder, storm and blaze,

Who would sweet summer banish its domain?

1) "Res est solliciti plena timoris amor." — *Ov. Her. I, 12.*

2) "Quam sit omnis amor sollicitus et anxius." — *Cic. Att. II, 25.*

Who list

The flowered Spring forswear for wind and rain?
 More than the Galilean votarist,
 Awatch to see, across the Egean main,
 Christ's kingdom flower through the morning mist,
 More than the Sulmonéan rhapsodist,
 Still sighing, 'neath the chill Cimmerian rays,
 For the rebirth of the Saturnian reign,
 More than the Volscian revolutionist,
 Rehearsing ever to the Alban ways
 The time he swayed the commons with his hist,
 More than the Syrian and the Romans twain,
 Yea, most of all who sing its pleasant praise,
 Of Love and all its mysteries he wist,

Our English amorist,
 Well skilled the tangles of the wildering maze
 Of loveful thought to loose and wind again,
 Our minnesinger of the latter days,
 Who said, nor said in vain,
 "All other pleasures are not worth its pain."

SUNSET-VOICES.

I.

THERE came a voice to me,
When the sun was like a star,
In the distance far away;
It spoke of worlds afar,
Beyond the sapphire sea,
Beyond the dying day.

Of other worlds it told,
Where Life and Love are one,
In some serener air;
Of shores beyond the sun,
Behind the evening-gold,
Where truth alone is fair;

Where one are thought and deed,
Where wish and will consent,
Where care comes not to blur
The face of fair intent
Nor faith's upspringing seed
Is baulked by falsehood's bur;

Where all our darling dreams,
Which died, whilst yet in leaf,
Shall know a brighter birth,
Where gladness pure from grief,
Where all is what it seems
And heaven unhemmed with earth.

II.

Ah, vain, ah, vaunting voice,
That wak'st my wounded heart
And mak'st it bleed again!
Yet must I needs rejoice
To hear thy speech, that art
My faded hopes' refrain.

For better, better far
To look and long and sigh
For some ideal thing,
To love some distant star,
Than chase, with churl and king,
Life's ever-changing lie!

Come back, come back to me
And murmur in my ear
Your melodies of yore,
O visions dread and dear,
O hopes of heaven in store,
Of Paradise to be!

For, since in one decay
Both good and ill must meet,
Why, then, let run to waste
The dreams that were so sweet?
Why cast the cup away,
If transient its taste?

Since sun and stars and sky,
Since heaven and sea and land
Are mirages of sight,
Which melt, when close at hand,
And all that meets the eye
But visions of the night,

Why, then, ah, why disdain
Delusions fond and fair,
Delights that do but seem?
Come back, sweet shapes of air,
And make my days again
A dream within a dream.

TRINITAS TRINITATUM.

LOVE is best:
To lie and rest,
Cradled on some darling breast,
What is sweeter,
What completer
Peace in all the perimeter
Of this round of nights and days?
Go thy ways,
World of weariness and madness,
Passing glee and poisoned gladness,
Ceasing cheer and staying sadness,
Nought have I to do with thee.
Play thy plays
With other preys;
Love is all in all to me.

Peace is best:
O heavenly guest,
North and South and East and West,
What is fairer,
What is rarer,
For the weary, footworn farer
Of the ways of sea and land,
Than thy hand
Laid upon his forehead's burning,
Than to find, in his returning,
From his spirit stress and yearning,
From his deeming doubt and care
Barred and banned,
At thy command,
Sorrow silenced, foul made fair?

Sleep is best:
 In slumber's nest,
 All forgotten, strife and quest,
 What is fitter,
 What is better
 For the weary would-be setter
 Of this world, the crooked, straight?
 Ope thy gate,
 Bird of bliss, and sooth my sorrow;
 From thy treasure bid me borrow
 Dreams of some serener morrow,
 Where with beauty one is truth:
 Snatch me straight
 From age and hate
 To the lands of love and youth!

Whether best
 Must be confessed?
 Love, peace, sleep, the palm contest.
 Love is sweetest,
 Peace is meetest,
 Sleep for sage and fool is featest:
 Each divine is: but the three,
 Met together in one treasure,
 To the height fill up the measure
 Of the heart's ideal pleasure.
 Be all three into one sheaf
 Bound for me
 By Fate's decree,
 And I'll scoff at glee and grief.

DE PROFUNDIS.

I.

COME, o ye nights and ye days of entrancement,
Back to my call!
Ye, with whose help for my spirit's enhancement,
Once I knew not what the strokes of mischance meant,
Feared not to fall;
Once had I youth, love and hope at my bidding,
Faith to enforce me 'gainst Fortune's forbidding;
Once was I ringed with resolve for the ridding
Thought of Time's thrall.
Now from me youth, love and hope have departed;
Left am I lonely and weariful-hearted,
Beggared of all.

Once was I buttressed and bastioned with dreaming,
Fenced from affray,
Vantaged with visions in glory still gleaming,
Fortressed of fancy 'gainst striving and seeming,
Doubt and dismay.
Now from my slumbers, alack! I awaken,
Find myself lonely, forlorn and forsaken,
All that I cherished to flight having taken,
Fleeted away.
Fate of my loves, one and all, hath bereft me;
All my bright mates have betrayed me and left me
Naked to-day.

II.

Where, oh my dreams and my visions, ah whither,

Where did ye fly?

Hither, again, oh ye runagates, hither

Come at my cry!

See, my soul sorrows, my bosom is bleeding;

Sore is my sufferance, utter my needing:

Surely ye will not pass by me, unheeding,

Leave me to die,

Me that have fostered you, cherished you, cared for you,

When all the world was a desert unshared for you,

All passed you by!

Yet, if ye will not restore me, or may not,

Aught of increase,

If Fate's foreordinance summon you stay not,

Force you to cease,

For the sweet life's sake of old that I led with you,

By the wild ways that my spirit did tread with you,

Give me again my soul's angel that fled with you,

White-wingèd Peace!

Render me back the mild magic that made me,

Midmost the toils and the woes that waylaid me,

Gideon's fleece!

A GHAZEL OF SPRING.

THE bird of the morning pipes in the perfumed meads
of Spring:

What shall the lips of the lover do in the May but sing?

What shall the heart of the poet do in the prime but hope,
When loosed are the locks of winter and Love in the land
is King?

The larks are aloft in heaven; the finches flute on the bough;
The brakes are alive with birdsong, the meadows with
blossoming.

The heart of the dreamer panteth with passion; his thought
is thrilled

With glory of coming summer and gladness of harvesting:

He heareth the cuckoo calling; he scenteth the rose afar;
He sees in the golden distance the cornfields glittering:

He spieth the ruby clusters aglow on the ripening vines:
'Twixt summer and Spring and autumn his wish is wavering.

The world from the wrack of winter rejoiceth redeemed to be;
The sweet of the year is swelling in every living thing;

The glee of the merry Maytime is glowing in every vein;
There's never a man but the poet that goeth pondering.

Since lover and dreamer revel, since blossom and bird rejoice,
 Since all men acclaim the Maytime with carol and pipe and
 string,

What aileth the sorry singer that he hath no heart to hope,
 That he for the new sweet season no note hath of welcoming?

Alack! for the doom he knoweth that doggeth the merry May;
 He knoweth the woes of winter tread hard on the heels of
 Spring:

He knoweth the frost-times follow the track of the flowered
 year;
 He knoweth the autumn cometh and setteth the birds a-wing.

Ye tell him in vain that winter will pass as the prime
 hath past;
 That May, with the year's returning, new blossoms and
 birds will bring:

The joys that are dead, he knoweth, will never again relive;
 The hearts that are sere will never again know blossoming:

Whatever the future bring us, whatever the new time bear,
 It cannot with morning's glamour regild our evening.

Though bright be the blooms it proffer, though perfect its
 linnets' lilt,
 It is not our flowers that flourish, it is not our birds that sing:

They all with our bygone gladness are fled to another clime
 And there with our hopes are waiting another sun-rising.

'Tis thus that the poet goeth alone in the May and mute,
 When highway and hill with revel and meadow and moor-
 land ring;

'Tis thus that, when men are merry and all in the land are glad,
When mad is the world with music and fragrance and
 flowering,

His eyes, betwixt past and future, are blind to the blaze
 of noon;

His heart and his soul are haunted with thoughts of
 another Spring,

With dreams of that mother-country where life shall lie
 down to rest,

Where peace shall be had for passion and silence for
 sorrowing.

SOLITUDINEM FACIUNT

SILENCE on the sea,
Silence in the sky,
Nought aloof, a-lee,
Not a cloud on high;
Emptiness on every hand, Nothing far and nigh.

In this soul of me
Neither smile nor sigh;
All, for grief and glee,
Gone and fledted by;
Nothing left of life and love, Nothing but to die.

Once, afar, anear,
Waves ran high and low;
Once, now dark, now clear,
Heaven above did show;
Once a live sky frowned and smiled O'er a live tide-flow.

Once, with hope and fear
Filled, my life did go;
Once, with smile and tear
Bloomed my heart ablow;
Once with grief and gladness throbbed. Was it better so?

Fain the sea had been
Then unstirred and still;
Fain the sky serene
Then had been at will;
Fain o'er stirless sea had heaven Flawless stretched its fill.

Fain I then had seen
Peace from good and ill,
Peace from high and mean,
Peace from throb and thrill,
Fain from joys that waste had been Free and griefs that kill.

Breeze no more and blast
Now the ocean crease;
Heaven no more o'ercast
Is by fleck or fleece;
Sky and sea are blank of wane Now and of increase.

Now from life, at last,
Hath my soul release;
Now my thoughts from past
And from future cease;
Now in nothingness I have Peace; but is it peace?

BIRD-PEEP.

THE birds beset me in the mists of morning,
The chill thin twilight of the dawning day:
A note of urgency, bidding, chiding, warning,
Is in their lay.

"Arise!" So runs the burden of their flyting;
"And to the morrowing day our matins share;
For better far," they say, Mohammed citing,
"Than sleep is prayer.

"Up, sluggard, up! The night is near its neaptide;
The morning shimmers through the shallowing mirk:
The hour is here that turns the sullen sleeptide
To wake and work."

Begone, ye wanton, over-early wakers,
Nor tear my tired ears with your shrilling call!
If you have had your twelve hours' sleep, wiseacres,
Not so with all.

Nay, some like me there be who have no choosing,
Who cannot sleep when all are slumbering,
Who needs must watch and wake, whilst you are snoozing,
Head under wing.

Fain must they snatch their sleep, when all are waking,
Who, when all sleep, must watch, whose night is day,
Their scanty stint of rest and ease how taking
And when they may.

And as for prayer, forsooth, methinks the chatter,
 With which you rend sleep's cobweb-subtle woof,
 No more like prayer is than the pitter-patter
 Of rain on roof.

Go preach to those who but by day burn eyelight:
 Your rede for those whose nights for slumber be,
 O pert Muezzins of the morning twilight,
 Is, not for me.

For me, who watch in this lugubrious London,
 All-nightly wandering in the ways of wake,
 Seeking the undone done, the done things undone
 Again to make;

For me, whose prayer is work, whose lauds are labour,
 Who watch the white stars scale the long sky-steep,
 More excellent (permitting noise and neighbour)
 Than prayer is sleep.

A LAST LULLABY.

INTO the rose-worlds of reverie, fairest, come follow me;
Cleave with me close to the skirts of the slackening day:
Be, ere the billows of blissfulness shadow and swallow me,
Hand in hand, heart in heart, woven with me for the Way.

Hark, on the strings of the harp of the sunseting breezes,
Wafted, the voice of the Viewless for burden is borne,
Willing us steer with the sun to the lands where love's ease is,
Fare with night's feet to the shores of the shadowless morn!

Far in the fathomless gold upon gold of the setting,
See, where the love-lands arise from an ocean of rest,
Havens of peace and of healing, fiords of forgetting,
Ports of soul-solacement, infinite isles of the blest!

There, in those meadows and harbours of azure unmeasured,
Sojourns of sorrow sublimed and of peace after pain,
There not a dream of our days and our nights but is treasured,
There not a hope of our hearts but is garnered again.

See, where the dear ones of old, of whom death hath bereft me,
All who forewent me in faring the shadow-ward ways,
All their fair faces, the friends who have loved me and left me,
Shine in the hovering sheen of the sunseting haze!

Hark, how they call to me! See, how they beckon and sign
to me,
Bidding me launch with the light on the westering wave,
Lapse from this life, which was ever but passion and pine to me,
Steer to the shores where the calm is, the rest which I crave!

Hear'st thou, my soul, how they hail from the sunseting
towers?

Seest how they beckon me sever from bondage and strife?
Feel'st how my feet are impelled by invisible powers?
Thou alone holdest me fast in the fetters of life.

Ware of the waves and the breezes, that watch to bereave thee!
Hold thou my hand, lest I drown in the halcyon deep:
Clip thou me close, O thou love of my loves, lest I leave thee,
Drawn of the dreams, lest I sink in the surges of sleep!

What, O my heart, were heav'n worth to me, save thou
wert there with me?

Even to Paradise will me not pass without thee.
Come with me, comfort me, company, follow and fare with me;
Steer my soul's bark through the brume and the surge of
Death's sea.

EVENSONG.

I.

ONE by one,
The pale years pass;
One by one, in being's glass
Drop the sands of time, unheeded,
Till the appointed term be run.
Faith hath fallen sere, unseeded;
Love is left to waste, unweeded;
What's to do with Life's unneeded
Moon and sun?

Were but life
To live again,
Sure, we fable, we were fain
Follow it on other fashion
Than the old of thrall and strife;
With more reason and less passion
It for the long road we'd ration,
Less contention, more compassion,
Ruth more rife.

Good of gain
Should take the place;
Gentleness should go with grace
Hand in hand in our new being,
Were our lives to live again:
Faith from fears should serve for freeing,
Ears for hearing, eyes for seeing,
Hands for holding, feet for fleeing
Peace and pain.

All above,
 In this our new
 Life, contentment we'd ensue,
 All the world to hope embolden
 With the lodestar of our love;
 Cause a-brood to be beholden
 O'er the world-all Peace, the olden
 Eyes of light and pinions golden
 Heaven's dove.

All the hours
 Of life we'd fill
 With the wonders of our will;
 Earth, with glories new, should, gleaming,
 Bring to birth new fruits and flowers:
 Certitude we'd win for seeming,
 Faith fulfilled for doubt and deeming,
 Wake to life and love this dreaming
 World of ours.

II.

Darling dreams,
 Before the day
 That must pale and pass away,
 Flowers of fancy never blowing
 But by Paradisal streams,
 Grains that germ from no man's sowing,
 Will ye evermore be showing
 Us, with glories new still glowing,
 What but seems?

Yet ye fill
 Our straining eyes
 With your scapes of brighter skies,
 From Life's bald and barren stubble

Golden cornfields conjure still,
 With the world-illusion's bubble
 Fool us yet, lest, toil and trouble
 Tired, we turn and burst Life's double
 Web of Will.

Yet repine
 Thou not, sad soul,
 If the golden glittering goal
 Never, from the mists unweaving,
 On thy ravished vision shine.
 Better gladness than grieving,
 Better than misdoubt believing
 And deception than deceiving
 Is, in fine.

Think not shame
 For thy defeat:
 Were thy visions vain, though sweet,
 But the noble thus mistaken
 Were, since life to light first came.
 Hold thy heart in trust unshaken:
 Hapless those who, faith-forsaken,
 Find their hopes, when they awaken,
 But a name!

Have no dole
 For thy dead dream.
 Though thou sawst what did but seem,
 There shall flower from thy failing
 Hope for many a hapless soul,
 Solacement to still his wailing,
 Confidence to quell his quailing,
 Faith to hold his heart availing
 White and whole.

One by one,
The days fill up,
Drop by drop, the Future's cup.
Hold thy hopes of right unrended
By the lapse of moon and sun;
Like the sentinel, watch ended,
Conscience clear, approof-attended,
Pass to rest, work wrought, way wended,
Duty done.

LIFE'S RECHEAT.

ON every hand we stumble, at threescore,
On graves, memorials of a bygone day,
The milestones of Life's over-travelled way.
Here lieth that which time may not restore:
The loves, the lusts, the hates of heretofore,
Youth's hopes and yearnings, visions grave and gay,
Here in Time's treasure are they laid away,
In their own shape to see the sun no more.

Though, as in youth, my soul is full of Spring,
Though, with an equal fire, the good, the true,
The awakening year, the flowering earth's increase,
All that is fair and feat, I love and sing,
Yet, at threescore, God wot, I should not rue
To lie with those I love and be at peace.

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